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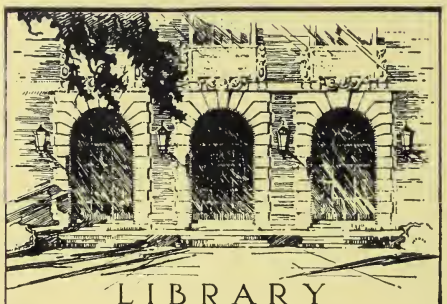

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THE VILLAGE,

THE PARISH REGISTER,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

THE REV. GEORGE CRABBE, LL.B.

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

HE, WHO TO ITALY OF SIRE ÆNEAS SUNG,
AND LEFT A NAME WHOSE GLORY NEVER FADES—
WHO RIVALLED HOMER WITH A ROMAN TONGUE—
EV'N HE, AMID HIS LOWLY SYLVAN SHADES,
MIGHT HAVE REMAINED UNKNOWN, AND PIPED UNHEARD,
HAD NO MÆCENAS LIVED AND LOVED THE BARD.
TRANSLATION FROM LUCAN.

EDINBURGH:
PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS;
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PREFACE TO THE VILLAGE, PARISH REGISTER, &c.

George Crabbe—the Poet of the Poor, as he has been termed—was himself originally a very poor man. He was born, December 24, 1754, in the small seaport of Aldborough, on the coast of Suffolk, where his father held the situation of collector of the salt duties, or salt-master. The borough was one of the most wretched and forlorn of its kind, inhabited by a few seafaring men, pilots, and fishers; and the house in which the poet first saw the light, bears an appearance little superior to the cottage at Alloway, where another eminent poet of the poor was, about the same time, ushered into existence. The salt-master was a man of imperious temper and violent passions, but possessed of intelligence superior to his neighbours; and his wife seems to have been a woman of excellent sense, of modest and consistent piety, and the best dispositions. Under the eye of such parents, and mingling daily with the rough sons of the ocean—a witness of unbridled passions, and of manners remote from the sameness and artificial smoothness of polished society—Crabbe spent his earlier years. The salt-master, in time, perceived that his eldest son possessed superior abilities, and he accordingly was at more expense with the education of the poet than with any of the rest of his children.

Crabbe's first teacher was an old woman of the village; but as soon as he was able to read, he became in a great measure his own instructor. He devoured every kind of book and scrap of reading which came in his way, but especially works of fiction. He was, moreover, a great listener to the old dames of the place, all of whom could tell strange stories either of real or fictitious life. His father, observing the bent of his inclinations, sent him to a school at Bungay, and afterwards to one of a superior kind at Stowmarket, where he acquired the elements of a classical education, with the view of becoming a surgeon.

After returning from school, some time elapsed ere a situation could be found for the young poet. The interval was employed in musings by the sea-beach, and studies both in books and in human beings—mingled with certain humble and by no means agreeable duties, to which he was put by his father, in the warehouse on the quay at Slaughden. At length, an apprentice was wanted by a surgeon at Wickham-Brook, near Bury St Edmund's; and Crabbe, in his fourteenth year, proceeded, with feelings easily imagined in a low-spirited gentle lad, to seek a strange, perhaps a severe home. His professional duties were here mingled with the drudgery of a farm—for his master had more occupations than one—and he was the daily companion and bedfellow of the plough-boy. After three years, spent by no means in a pleasant manner, he was removed, in 1771, to a more eligible situation at Woodbridge, where he concluded his apprenticeship four years after. While residing in this place, he became distinguished in a local circle as a writer of verses. His poetical tendencies were nursed by an attachment which he formed in his eighteenth year, to a Miss Sarah Elmy, then residing in the house of her uncle, a yeoman named Tovell, at the neighbouring village of Parham. Miss Elmy was a prudent and amiable young lady, qualified at once to inspire and criticise his song; and, some years after, in more propitious times, became the poet's wife.

At the termination of his apprenticeship commenced that series of hardships and misfortunes which gives to the poet's life its chief interest and value. On returning to Aldborough, he found his father unable to advance his professional education any further; and he had no alternative but to descend once more to those drudgeries in the warehouse on Slaughden quay, which he formerly so much abhorred. His father had now become a sot and a domestic tyrant; and violent and unseemly quarrels sometimes took place between him and the young poet. While daily engaged in piling butter and cheese on an open quay, in the dress of a common warehouseman, George Crabbe did not forget his attachment to the muse or to Miss Elmy: the hope of a permanent union with that young lady was what chiefly sustained his spirit under his present degradations, and enabled him finally to rise above them. After some time spent in this manner, his father made an effort to enable him to acquire some surgical knowledge in the London hospitals. The young poet proceeded to the capital in a trading sloop, and spent ten months in a vain endeavour to obtain what was alike beyond his limited resources and his natural gifts. From the very first, he found himself deficient in that manual dexterity and ready sharpness of mind which are the first essentials in a surgeon. He nevertheless returned to Aldborough, and actually commenced practice, though with little or no success. The place was poor: an expert and long-established rival possessed by far the larger and better part of the practice; and Crabbe had that antipathy to his art which precluded improvement. His general abilities appear at this time to have been respected by those able to judge of them; but the prevailing opinion of him was, that he was a good-for-nothing and unpromising young man. Under all his misfortunes, he was solaced by the dreams of a poet, and the hopes of a virtuous attachment. About the end of the year 1779, he formed the resolution—a desperate one, no doubt, but almost unavoidable—of proceeding to London, and commencing the career of a literary adventurer.

By means of five pounds, which he requested and obtained from Mr Dudley North, brother to the candidate for Aldborough, he was enabled to carry his project into execution. He sailed for London, as formerly, in a trading sloop, carrying with him a box of clothes, a case of surgical instruments, and three pounds in money. In the great city he was acquainted with only one family, that of a Mr Burcham, a linen-draper in Cornhill, whose wife had been the youthful friend of Miss Elmy. By these worthy people he was received with the greatest kindness, and invited to make the house his home whenever he chose. In order to be near them, he took lodgings with Mr Vickery, a hair-dresser near the Exchange. He first busied himself in correcting and transcribing all the poetical pieces he had brought with him, and then made several attempts to contract with booksellers for their publication. Had he been better acquainted with the world, he would have known that for a man of even considerable abilities to throw himself upon the world at once, with no hope but in the publication of his writings, especially in a distinct form, is the very height of imprudence: he would have rather sought some ordinary means of livelihood, however humble, and, by the employment of his leisure only, endeavoured to acquire such a station in the literary world as to render subsistence certain. In a later day he might have perhaps gained his object by writing for the periodicals, which now afford a comparatively ready means of realising money from literary exertion. As might have been expected, the booksellers to whom he showed his poetical wares, even while acknowledging their merit, declined to take the risk of publishing what they had little hope of selling. Only in one case did he find it possible to obtain a hearing from the public: a Mr Payne published for him a small quarto pamphlet containing "The Candidate, a Poem;" which, though disparaged by the reviews, realised a trifle of profit—but of this the unfortunate author was deprived by the failure of his bookseller. His little stock of money soon became exhausted; his surgical instruments, books, and other little articles, went to the pawnbroker's; he fell into debt with his landlord, and soon began to experience the greatest distress from want. His friend Burcham was still kind; but an occasional meal, which was all his proud spirit would brook to receive, was insufficient to support him.

When every hope of immediate subsistence from publishing had failed, he adopted an expedient which, though then perhaps considered more proper than it would be now, must still be in a great measure attributed to his

imperfect acquaintance with the world. He addressed parcels of his poems, in manuscript, to various noblemen of high political station, accompanied by letters in which he candidly explained the pressing nature of his wants, and claimed such pecuniary assistance as they might think his compositions entitled him to. Lords Shelburne and North, and the Lord Chancellor Thurlow, were addressed by him in this manner, without success. His letters were either altogether disregarded, or coldly alluded to in a formal answer. It was early in 1781, and when reduced to nearly the last degree of wretchedness, that some "propitious influence," as he himself calls it, impelled him to make a last effort of this kind with Edmund Burke, a man who, whatever may be thought of his political history, certainly possessed the elements of a great and generous nature. The letter, in this instance, contained a brief and modest account of himself—of his poetical attempts, his repulses, his misery—and concluded with a most affecting appeal to the compassion of the gentleman addressed. Mr Burke, though at this time engaged in the very front of a keen political warfare, instantly lent attention to the claims of the young poet. He read and approved the verses, sent for the bard, and, being much pleased with his appearance and manners, at once received him as an honoured guest into his house. It is rarely that any man treats another with so much generosity as that which Burke displayed towards Crabbe. Having satisfied himself that the young outcast of the London streets was a real poet, and possessed of the manners and feelings of a gentleman, he undertook to maintain him till he should be able to turn his talents to some account. That this consummation might the sooner arrive, he applied himself to the task of selecting and correcting such of the poet's writings as he thought best qualified to attract public notice. Meanwhile, he introduced Crabbe to Sir Joshua Reynolds, to Dr Samuel Johnson, and other persons whose acquaintance was an honour: nor was there wanting that delicacy which their relative situations demanded. Burke treated his young dependent with such unvarying kindness and attention, as placed him exactly upon his own level, and cancelled as far as possible all appearance of obligation.

Under Mr Burke's patronage, the poem entitled "the Library" was published with distinguished success in 1782. It was followed in little time by "the Village" and "the Newspaper," by which his fame as a poet was established. He now took orders as a clergyman, and, by the exertions of Mr Burke, obtained various small livings, besides the office of chaplain to the Duke of Rutland, which last, however, he did not retain long. Towards the end of the year 1783, finding himself amply provided against the expenses of married life, he united himself to Miss Elmy, the object of his early attachment, by whom he had a large family.

For twenty-four years after this period, Crabbe was contented to execute the duties of a parish priest, chiefly at Muston in Leicestershire, and to enjoy the comforts of a virtuous home, without wishing to support or revive his literary reputation. The world had in a great measure forgot the author of "the Library" and "the Village," or looked upon these poems as the productions of a past age, when, in 1807, he brought out his poem of "the Parish Register," which not only renewed his fame, but greatly extended it. It is said that the cause of his thus coming again before the world, was a wish to obtain the means of educating his sons. The success of "the Parish Register" was, however, such, that he was tempted to new efforts, and "the Borough," in 1810, and "Tales in Verse," in 1812, showed that the second spring of his poetical talent was no transient illusion. After another considerable interval, he produced, in 1819, his "Tales of the Hall," in two volumes. His amiable and virtuous life was concluded at Trowbridge, February 3, 1832; and, since then, a new volume of tales in verse, which he left in manuscript, has been given to the world by his son, as part of an elegant uniform edition of his works published by Mr Murray of Albemarle Street.

What chiefly distinguishes Crabbe as a poet, is the unflattering truth and reality of his representations. He set out in poetical life with the design expressed in the commencement of his "Village," that of painting the moral world, not as poets had been accustomed to paint it, but under the oppression of all those shades of uncouthness, vice, hardship, and misery, which appeared to him actually to characterise it, mingled of course with the softer and more pleasing lights furnished by well-directed industry and simple worth. His own experiences as a struggling youth of genius, amidst a rude people, and in a sterile and poverty-struck region, had been such as to awake his mind peculiarly to the less pleasant traits of his subject: it may even be allowed that they have induced him to give undue force to those traits, and to send forth pictures which, though perhaps locally, are not generally true, and, though correct in detail, are not so in the whole. This injustice to the mass of humble society is, however, amply compensated by that stark-staring justice, as it may be called, which he renders both to particular scenes and to particular characters—a thing almost new in poetry, and one of the last things which any second-rate mind would have thought of introducing into it—which will ever accordingly, in a dispensation of the honours of British poetry, be placed to the credit of Crabbe—"nature's sternest painter," as Byron has termed him, "but the best." "Mr Crabbe," says a scarcely less distinguished panegyrist — Francis Jeffrey — "is the greatest mannerist of all our living poets; and it is rather unfortunate that the most prominent features of his mannerism are not the most pleasing. The homely, quaint, and prosaic style—the flat and often broken and jingling versification—the eternal full-lengths of low and worthless characters—with their accustomed garnishings of sly jokes and familiar moralising—are all upon the surface of his writings, and are almost unavoidably the things by which we are first reminded of him, when we take up any of his new productions. Yet they are not the things that truly constitute his peculiar manner, or give that character by which he will, and ought to be, remembered with future generations. He has other gifts; and those not less peculiarly or less strongly marked—an unrivalled and almost magical power of observation, resulting in descriptions so true to nature as to strike us rather as transcripts than imitations—an anatomy of character and feeling not less exquisite and less searching—an occasional touch of matchless tenderness—and a deep and dreadful pathetic, interspersed by fits, and strangely interwoven with the most minute and humble of his details. Add to all this the sure and profound sagacity of the remarks with which he every now and then startles us in the midst of very unambitious discussions; and the weight and terseness of the maxims which he drops, like oracular responses, on occasions that give no promise of such a revelation; and last, though not least, that sweet and seldom sounded chord of lyrical inspiration, the lightest touch of which instantly charms away all harshness from his numbers, and all lowness from his themes—and at once exalts him to a level with the most energetic and inventive poets of the age."

It has been remarked, that, though Crabbe professedly preaches to the common people, the range of the circulation of his poems has hitherto been confined in a great measure to the highly educated and the affluent. This is probably owing to the manner in which his poems have hitherto been published. In the present edition of some of his rural pieces (printed from the corrected edition of the author, 1809), the principal object aimed at is to introduce Crabbe to the great bulk of his countrymen, as one who ought to take his place among their most valued classics, and from whose lessons, severe as they may be in many instances, they may be expected to derive much instruction, as well as pleasure.

Edinburgh, *January* 1833.

THE VILLAGE:

IN TWO BOOKS.

BOOK I.

The village life and every care that reigns
O'er youthful peasants and declining swains;
What labour yields and what, that labour past,
Age, in its hour of languor, finds at last;
What form the real picture of the poor,
Demand a song—the muse can give no more.
Fled are those times, when, in harmonious strains,
The rustic poet prais'd his native plains;
No shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,
Their country's beauty or their nymphs' rehearse;
Yet still for these we frame the tender strain,
Still in our lays fond Corydons complain,
And shepherds' boys, their amorous pains reveal,
The only pains, alas! they never feel.
On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's bounteous reign,
If Tityrus found the golden age again,
Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Virgil, not where fancy, leads the way?
Yes, thus the muses sing of happy swains,
Because the muses never knew their pains:
They boast their peasants' pipes: but peasants now
Resign their pipes and plod behind the plough;
And few amid the rural tribe have time,
To number syllables and play with rhyme;
Save honest Duck, what son of verse could share
The poet's rapture and the peasant's care?
Or the great labours of the field degrade,
With the new peril of a poorer trade?
From this chief cause these idle praises spring,
That themes so easy few forbear to sing;
For no deep thought the trifling subjects ask,
To sing of shepherds is an easy task;
The happy youth assumes the common strain,
A nymph his mistress and himself a swain;
With no sad scenes he clouds his tuneful prayer,
But all, to look like her, is painted fair.
I grant indeed that fields and flocks have charms,
For him that gazes or for him that farms;
But when amid such pleasing scenes I trace
The poor laborious natives of the place,
And see the mid-day sun, with fervid ray,
On their bare heads and dewy temples play;
While some, with feebler heads and fainter hearts,
Deplore their fortune, yet sustain their parts;
Then shall I dare these real ills to hide,
In tinsel trappings of poetic pride?
No; cast by fortune on a frowning coast,
Which neither groves nor happy valleys boast;
Where other cares than those the muse relates,
And other shepherds dwell with other mates;
By such examples taught, I paint the cot,
As truth will paint it and as bards will not:
For you, ye poor, of letter'd scorn complain,
To you the smoothest song is smooth in vain;
O'ercome by labour and bow'd down by time,
Feel you the barren flattery of a rhyme?
Can poets soothe you, when you pine for bread,
By winding myrtles round your ruin'd shed?
Can their light tales your weighty griefs o'erpower,
Or glad with airy mirth the toilsome hour?
Lo! where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its wither'd ears;
Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land and rob the blighted rye:
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war;
There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil;
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;
O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;
With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
And a sad splendour vainly shines around.
So looks the nymph whom wretched arts adorn,
Betray'd by man, then left for man to scorn;
Whose cheek in vain assumes the mimic rose,
While her sad eyes the troubled breast disclose;
Whose outward splendour is but folly's dress,
Exposing most, when most it gilds distress.
Here joyless roam a wild amphibious race,
With sullen woe display'd in every face;
Who, far from civil arts and social fly,
And scowl at strangers with suspicious eye.
Here too the lawless merchant of the main
Draws from his plough th' intoxicated swain;
Want only claim'd the labour of the day,
But vice now steals his nightly rest away.
Where are the swains, who, daily labour done,
With rural games play'd down the setting sun;
Who struck with matchless force the bounding ball,
Or made the pond'rous quoit obliquely fall;
While some huge Ajax, terrible and strong,
Engag'd some artful stripling of the throng,
And fell beneath him, foil'd, while far around,
Hoarse triumph rose and rocks return'd the sound?
Where now are these?—Beneath yon cliff they stand,
To show the freighted pinnace where to land;
To load the ready steed with guilty haste,
To fly in terror o'er the pathless waste,
Or when detected, in their straggling course,
To foil their foes by cunning or by force;
Or yielding part (which equal knaves demand),
To gain a lawless passport through the land.
Here wand'ring long, amid these frowning fields,
I sought the simple life that Nature yields;
Rapine and wrong and fear usurp'd her place,
And a bold, artful, surly, savage race;
Who, only skill'd to take the finny tribe,
The yearly dinner, or septennial bribe,
Wait on the shore, and as the waves run high,
On the tost vessel bend their eager eye;
Which to their coast directs its vent'rous way,
Theirs or the ocean's miserable prey.

As on their neighbouring beach yon swallows stand,
And wait for favouring winds to leave the land;
While still for flight the ready wing is spread:
So waited I the favouring hour, and fled;
Fled from these shores where guilt and famine reign,
And cry'd, ah! hapless they who still remain;
Who still remain to hear the ocean roar,
Whose greedy waves devour the lessening shore;
Till some fierce tide, with more imperious sway,
Sweeps the low hut and all it holds away;
When the sad tenant weeps from door to door,
And begs a poor protection from the poor!

But these are scenes where Nature's niggard hand
Gave a spare portion to the famish'd land;
Hers is the fault, if here mankind complain
Of fruitless toil and labour spent in vain;
But yet in other scenes more fair in view,
Where plenty smiles—alas! she smiles for few,
And those who taste not, yet behold her store,
Are as the slaves that dig the golden ore,
The wealth around them makes them doubly poor.

Or will you deem them amply paid in health,
Labour's fair child, that languishes with wealth?
Go then! and see them rising with the sun,
Through a long course of daily toil to run;
See them beneath the Dog-star's raging heat,
When the knees tremble and the temples beat;
Behold them, leaning on their scythes, look o'er
The labour past, and toils to come explore;
See them alternate suns and showers engage,
And hoard up aches and anguish for their age;
Through fens and marshy moors their steps pursue,
When their warm pores imbibe the evening dew;
Then own that labour may as fatal be
To these thy slaves, as thine excess to thee.

Amid this tribe too oft a manly pride
Strives in strong toil the fainting heart to hide;
There may you see the youth of slender frame
Contend with weakness, weariness, and shame;
Yet urg'd along, and proudly loth to yield,
He strives to join his fellows of the field;
Till long-contending Nature droops at last,
Declining health rejects his poor repast,
His cheerless spouse the coming danger sees,
And mutual murmurs urge the slow disease.

Yet grant them health, 'tis not for us to tell,
Though the head droops not, that the heart is well;
Or will you praise that homely, healthy fare,
Plenteous and plain, that happy peasants share?
Oh! trifle not with wants you cannot feel,
Nor mock the misery of a stinted meal;
Homely not wholesome, plain not plenteous, such
As you who praise would never deign to touch.

Ye gentle souls, who dream of rural ease,
Whom the smooth stream and smoother sonnet please;
Go! if the peaceful cot your praises share,
Go look within, and ask if peace be there;
If peace be his—that drooping weary sire,
Or theirs, that offspring round their feeble fire;
Or hers, that matron pale, whose trembling hand
Turns on the wretched hearth th' expiring brand!

Nor yet can time itself obtain for these
Life's latest comforts, due respect and ease;
For yonder see that hoary swain, whose age
Can with no cares except its own engage;
Who, propt on that rude staff, looks up to see
The bare arms broken from the withering tree;
On which, a boy, he climb'd the loftiest bough,
Then his first joy, but his sad emblem now.

He once was chief in all the rustic trade,
His steady hand the straightest furrow made;
Full many a prize he won, and still is proud
To find the triumphs of his youth allow'd;
A transient pleasure sparkles in his eyes,
He hears and smiles, then thinks again and sighs;
For now he journeys to his grave in pain;
The rich disdain him; nay, the poor disdain:
Alternate masters now their slave command,
Urge the weak efforts of his feeble hand,
And, when his age attempts its task in vain,
With ruthless taunts, of lazy poor complain.*

Oft may you see him when he tends the sheep
His winter-charge, beneath the hillock weep;
Oft hear him murmur to the winds that blow
O'er his white locks and bury them in snow;
When rous'd by rage and muttering in the morn,
He mends the broken hedge with icy thorn.

"Why do I live, when I desire to be
At once from life and life's long labour free?
Like leaves in spring, the young are blown away,
Without the sorrows of a slow decay;
I, like yon wither'd leaf, remain behind,
Nipt by the frost and shivering in the wind;
There it abides till younger buds come on,
As I, now all my fellow swains are gone;
Then, from the rising generation thrust,
It falls, like me, unnotic'd to the dust.

"These fruitful fields, these numerous flocks I see,
Are others' gain, but killing cares to me;
To me the children of my youth are lords,
Cool in their looks, but hasty in their words:
Wants of their own demand their care; and who
Feels his own want and succours others too?
A lonely, wretched man, in pain I go,
None need my help and none relieve my woe;
Then let my bones beneath the turf be laid,
And men forget the wretch they would not aid."

Thus groan the old, till, by disease opprest,
They taste a final woe and then they rest.

Theirs is yon house that holds the parish poor,
Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door;
There, where the putrid vapours flagging, play,
And the dull wheel hums doleful through the day;—
There children dwell who know no parents' care;
Parents, who know no children's love, dwell there;
Heart-broken matrons on their joyless bed,
Forsaken wives and mothers never wed
Dejected widows with unheeded tears,
And crippled age with more than childhood-fears;
The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they!
The moping idiot and the madman gay.

Here too the sick their final doom receive,
Here brought amid the scenes of grief, to grieve,
Where the loud groans from some sad chamber flow,
Mixt with the clamours of the crowd below;
Here sorrowing, they each kindred sorrow scan,
And the cold charities of man to man:
Whose laws indeed for ruin'd age provide,
And strong compulsion plucks the scrap from pride;
But still that scrap is bought with many a sigh,
And pride embitters what it can't deny.
Say ye, oppress by some fantastic woes,
Some jarring nerve that baffles your repose;
Who press the downy couch, while slaves advance
With timid eye, to read the distant glance;
Who with sad prayers the weary doctor tease,
To name the nameless ever-new disease;
Who with mock patience dire complaints endure,
Which real pain and that alone can cure;
How would ye bear in real pain to lie,
Despis'd, neglected, left alone to die?
How would ye bear to draw your latest breath,
Where all that's wretched pave the way for death

Such is that room which one rude beam divides,
And naked rafters from the sloping sides;
Where the vile bands that bind the thatch are seen,
And lath and mud are all that lie between;
Save one dull pane, that, coarsely patch'd, gives way
To the rude tempest, yet excludes the day:
Here, on a matted flock, with dust o'erspread,
The drooping wretch reclines his languid head;
For him no hand the cordial cup applies,
Or wipes the tear that stagnates in his eyes;
No friends with soft discourse his pain beguile,
Or promise hope till sickness wears a smile.

* A pauper who, being nearly past his labour, is employed by different masters, for a length of time proportioned to their occupations.

But soon a loud and hasty summons calls,
Shakes the thin roof, and echoes round the walls;
Anon, a figure enters, quaintly neat,
All pride and business, bustle and conceit
With looks unalter'd by these scenes of woe,
With speed that, entering, speaks his haste to go;
He bids the gazing throng around him fly,
And carries fate and physic in his eye;
A potent quack, long vers'd in human ills,
Who first insults the victim whom he kills;
Whose murd'rous hand a drowsy bench protect,
And whose most tender mercy is neglect.
Paid by the parish for attendance here,
He wears contempt upon his sapient sneer;
In haste he seeks the bed where misery lies,
Impatience mark'd in his averted eyes;
And, some habitual queries hurried o'er,
Without reply, he rushes on the door;
His drooping patient, long inur'd to pain,
And long unheeded, knows remonstrance vain;
He ceases now the feeble help to crave
Of man; and silent sinks into the grave.
But ere his death some pious doubts arise,
Some simple fears which "bold bad" men despise;
Fain would he ask the parish priest to prove
His title certain to the joys above;
For this he sends the murmuring nurse, who calls
The holy stranger to these dismal walls;
And doth not he, the pious man, appear,
He, "passing rich with forty pounds a-year?"
Ah! no, a shepherd of a different stock,
And far unlike him, feeds this little flock
A jovial youth, who thinks his Sunday's task,
As much as God or man can fairly ask.
The rest he gives to loves and labours light,
To fields the morning and to feasts the night;
None better skill'd the noisy pack to guide,
To urge their chase, to cheer them or to chide;
A sportsman keen, he shoots through half the day,
And skill'd at whist, devotes the night to play;
Then, while such honours bloom around his head,
Shall he sit sadly by the sick man's bed,
To raise the hope he feels not, or with zeal
To combat fears that ev'n the pious feel?
Now once again the gloomy scene explore,
Less gloomy now; the bitter hour is o'er,
The man of many sorrows sighs no more.
Up yonder hill, behold how sadly slow
The bier moves winding from the vale below;
There lie the happy dead from trouble free,
And the glad parish pays the frugal fee:
No more, O Death! thy victim starts to hear
Churchwarden stern, or kingly overseer;
No more the farmer claims his humble bow,
Thou art his lord, the best of tyrants thou!
Now to the church behold the mourners come,
Sedately torpid and devoutly dumb;
The village children now their games suspend,
To see the bier that bears their ancient friend;
For he was one in all their idle sport,
And like a monarch rul'd their little court;
The pliant bow he form'd, the flying ball,
The bat, the wicket, were his labours all;
Him now they follow to his grave, and stand
Silent and sad, and gazing, hand in hand;
While bending low, their eager eyes explore
The mingled relics of the parish poor:
The bell tolls late, the moping owl flies round,
Fear marks the flight and magnifies the sound;
The busy priest, detain'd by weightier care,
Defers his duty till the day of prayer;
And waiting long, the crowd retire distrest,
To think a poor man's bones should lie unblest.*

* Some apology is due for the insertion of a circumstance by no means common: That it has been a subject for complaint in any place, is a sufficient reason for its being reckoned among the evils which may happen to the poor, and which must happen to them exclusively; nevertheless, it is just to remark, that such neglect is very rare in any part of the kingdom, and in many parts is totally unknown.

BOOK II.

No longer truth, though shown in verse, disdain,
But own the village life a life of pain;
I too must yield, that oft amid these woes
Are gleams of transient mirth and hours of sweet repose,
Such as you find on yonder sportive green,
The 'squire's tall gate and churchway-walk between;
Where loitering stray a little tribe of friends,
On a fair Sunday when the sermon ends:
Then rural beaux their best attire put on,
To win their nymphs, as other nymphs are won
While those long wed go plain, and by degrees,
Like other husbands quit their care to please.
Some of the sermon talk, a sober crowd,
And loudly praise, if it were preach'd aloud;
Some on the labours of the week look round,
Feel their own worth, and think their toil renown'd;
While some, whose hopes to no renown extend,
Are only pleas'd to find their labours end.
Thus, as their hours glide on with pleasure fraught,
Their careful masters brood the painful thought;
Much in their mind they murmur and lament,
That one fair day should be so idly spent;
And think that Heaven deals hard, to tithe their store
And tax their time for preachers and the poor.
Yet still, ye humbler friends, enjoy your hour,
This is your portion, yet unclaim'd of power;
This is Heaven's gift to weary men opprest,
And seems the type of their expected rest:
But yours, alas! are joys that soon decay;
Frail joys, begun and ended with the day;
Or yet, while day permits those joys to reign,
The village vices drive them from the plain.
See the stout churl, in drunken fury great,
Strike the bare bosom of his teeming mate!
His naked vices, rude and unrefin'd,
Exert their open empire o'er the mind;
But can we less the senseless rage despise,
Because the savage acts without disguise?
Yet here disguise, the city's vice, is seen,
And slander steals along and taints the green.
At her approach domestic peace is gone,
Domestic broils at her approach come on;
She to the wife the husband's crime conveys,
She tells the husband when his consort strays;
Her busy tongue, through all the little state,
Diffuses doubt, suspicion, and debate;
Peace, tim'rous goddess! quits her old domain,
In sentiment and song content to reign.
Nor are the nymphs that breathe the rural air
So fair as Cynthia's, nor so chaste as fair;
These to the town afford each fresher face,
And the clown's trull receives the peer's embrace;
From whom, should chance again convey her down,
The peer's disease in turn attacks the clown.
Here too the 'squire, or 'squire-like farmer, talk,
How round their regions nightly pilferers walk;
How from their ponds the fish are borne, and all
The rip'ning treasures from their lofty wall;
How meaner rivals in their sports delight,
Just rich enough to claim a doubtful right;
Who take a licence round their fields to stray,
A mongrel race! the poachers of the day.
And hark! the riots of the green begin,
That sprang at first from yonder noisy inn;
What time the weekly pay was vanish'd all,
And the slow hostess scor'd the threat'ning wall;
What time they ask'd, their friendly feast to close,
A final cup, and that will make them foes;
When blows ensue that break the arm of toil,
And rustic battle ends the boobies' broil.
Save when to yonder hall they bend their way;
Where the grave justice ends the grievous fray;
He who recites, to keep the poor in awe,
The law's vast volume—for he knows the law.
To him with anger or with shame repair
The injur'd peasant and deluded fair.

Lo! at his throne the silent nymph appears,
Frail by her shape, but modest in her tears;
And while she stands abash'd, with conscious eye,
Some favourite female of her judge glides by:
Who views with scornful glance the strumpet's fate,
And thanks the stars that made her keeper great:
Near her the swain, about to bear for life
One certain evil, doubts 'twixt war and wife;
But, while the faultering damsel takes her oath,
Consents to wed, and so secures them both.
Yet why, you ask, these humble crimes relate,
Why make the poor as guilty as the great?
To show the great, those mightier sons of pride
How near in vice the lowest are allied;
Such are their natures and their passions such,
But these disguise too little, those too much:
So shall the man of power and pleasure see
In his own slave as vile a wretch as he;
In his luxurious lord the servant find
His own low pleasures and degenerate mind:
And each in all the kindred vices trace,
Of a poor, blind, bewilder'd, erring race;
Who, a short time in varied fortune past,
Die, and are equal in the dust at last.
And you, ye poor, who still lament your fate,
Forbear to envy those you call the great;
And know, amid those blessings they possess,
They are, like you, the victims of distress;
While sloth with many a pang torments her slave,
Fear waits on guilt, and danger shakes the brave.
Oh! if in life one noble chief appears,
Great in his name, while blooming in his years;
Born to enjoy whate'er delights mankind,
And yet to all you feel or fear resign'd;
Who gave up joys and hopes to you unknown,
For pains and dangers greater than your own;
If such there be, then let your murmurs cease,
Think, think of him, and take your lot in peace.
And such there was:—Oh! grief, that checks our pride,
Weeping we say there was—for Manners died;
Belov'd of heav'n, these humble lines forgive,
That sing of thee,* and thus aspire to live.
As the tall oak, whose vigorous branches form
An ample shade and brave the wildest storm,
High o'er the subject wood is seen to grow,
The guard and glory of the trees below;
Till on its head the fiery bolt descends,
And o'er the plain the shatter'd trunk extends;
Yet then it lies, all wond'rous as before,
And still the glory, though the guard no more.
So thou, when every virtue, every grace,
Rose in thy soul, or shone within thy face;
When, though the son of Granby, thou wert known
Less by thy father's glory than thy own;
When honour lov'd and gave thee every charm,
Fire to thy eye and vigour to thy arm;
Then from our lofty hopes and longing eyes,
Fate and thy virtues call'd thee to the skies
Yet still we wonder at thy tow'ring fame,
And losing thee, still dwell upon thy name.

Oh! ever honour'd, ever valued! say,
What verse can praise thee, or what work repay?
Yet verse (in all we can) thy worth repays,
Nor trusts the tardy zeal of future days;—
Honours for thee thy country shall prepare,
Thee in their hearts, the good, the brave shall bear;
To deeds like thine shall noblest chiefs aspire,
The muse shall mourn thee, and the world admire.
In future times, when, smit with glory's charms,
The untry'd youth first quits a father's arms;—
"Oh! be like him," the weeping sire shall say;
"Like Manners walk, who walk'd in honour's way;
In danger foremost, yet in death sedate,
Oh! be like him in all things, but his fate!"
If for that fate such public tears be shed,
That victory seems to die now thou art dead;
How shall a friend his nearer hope resign,
That friend a brother, and whose soul was thine;
By what bold lines shall we his grief express,
Or by what soothing numbers make it less?
'Tis not, I know, the chiming of a song,
Nor all the powers that to the muse belong,
Words aptly cull'd and meanings well exprest,
Can calm the sorrows of a wounded breast;
But virtue, soother of the fiercest pains,
Shall heal that bosom, Rutland, where she reigns.
Yet hard the task to heal the bleeding heart,
To bid the still-recurring thoughts depart;
Tame the fierce grief and stem the rising sigh,
And curb rebellious passion, with reply;—
Calmly to dwell on all that pleas'd before
And yet to know that all shall please no more;—
Oh! glorious labour of the soul to save
Her captive powers, and bravely mourn the brave.
To such, these thoughts will lasting comfort give—
Life is not measur'd by the time we live;
'Tis not an even course of threescore years,
A life of narrow views and paltry fears,
Grey hairs and wrinkles and the cares they bring,
That take from death, the terrors or the sting;
But 'tis the gen'rous spirit, mounting high
Above the world, that native of the sky;
The noble spirit, that, in dangers brave,
Calmly looks on, or looks beyond the grave:—
Such Manners was, so he resign'd his breath,
If in a glorious, then a timely death
Cease then that grief and let those tears subside;
If passion rule us, be that passion pride;
If reason, reason bids us strive to raise
Our fallen hearts and be like him we praise!
Or if affection still the soul subdue,
Bring all his virtues, all his worth in view,
And let affection find its comfort too:
For how can grief so deeply wound the heart,
When admiration claims so large a part?
Grief is a foe, expel him then thy soul,
Let nobler thoughts the nearer views control!
Oh! make the age to come thy better care,
See other Rutlands, other Granbys there!
And as thy thoughts through streaming ages glide,
See other heroes die as Manners died:
And from their fate, thy race shall nobler grow,
As trees shoot upwards that are prun'd below;
Or as Old Thames, borne down with decent pride,
Sees his young streams run warbling at his side;
Though some, by art cut off, no longer run,
And some are lost beneath the summer's sun—
Yet the pure stream moves on, and as it moves,
Its power increases and its use improves;
While plenty round its spacious waves bestow,
Still it flows on, and shall for ever flow.

* Lord Robert Manners, the youngest son of the Marquis of Granby and the Lady Frances Seymour, daughter of Charles Duke of Somerset, was born the 5th of February 1758, and was placed with his brother, the late Duke of Rutland, at Eton School, where he acquired, and ever after retained, a considerable knowledge of the classical authors.

Lord Robert, after going through the duties of his profession on board different ships, was made captain of the Resolution, and commanded her in nine different actions, besides that last memorable one on the 2d of April 1782, when, in breaking the French line of battle, he received the wounds which terminated his life, in the 24th year of his age.—*See the Annual Register, printed for Mr Dodsley.*

THE PARISH REGISTER: IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.—Baptisms.

THE year revolves, and I again explore
The simple annals of my parish poor;
What infant-members in my flock appear,
What pairs I blest in the departed year;
And who, of old or young, or nymphs or swains,
Are lost to life, its pleasures and its pains.
No muse I ask, before my view to bring
The humble actions of the swains I sing.
How pass'd the youthful, how the old their days,
Who sank in sloth and who aspir'd to praise;
Their tempers, manners, morals, customs, arts,
What parts they had, and how they employed their parts;
By what elated, sooth'd, seduc'd, deprest,
Full well I know—these records give the rest.
Is there a place, save one the poet sees,
A land of love, of liberty and ease;
Where labour wearies not, nor cares suppress
Th' eternal flow of rustic happiness;
Where no proud mansion frowns in awful state,
Or keeps the sunshine from the cottage-gate;
Where young and old, intent on pleasure, throng,
And half man's life is holiday and song?
Vain search for scenes like these! no view appears,
By sighs unruffled or unstain'd by tears;
Since vice the world subdued and waters drown'd,
Auburn and Eden can no more be found.
Hence good and evil mix'd, but man has skill
And power to part them, when he feels the will;
Toil, care, and patience, bless the abstemious few,
Fear, shame, and want, the thoughtless herd pursue.
Behold the cot! where thrives th' industrious swain,
Source of his pride, his pleasure, and his gain;
Screen'd from the winter's wind, the sun's last ray
Smiles on the window and prolongs the day;
Projecting thatch the woodbine's branches stop,
And turn their blossoms to the casement's top:—
All need requires is in that cot contain'd,
And much that taste, untaught and unrestrain'd,
Surveys delighted; there she loves to trace,
In one gay picture, all the royal race;
Around the walls are heroes, lovers, kings;
The print that shows them and the verse that sings.
Here the last Lewis on his throne is seen,
And there he stands imprison'd and his queen;
To these the mother takes her child, and shows
What grateful duty to his GOD he owes;
Who gives to him a happy home and free,
With life's ennobling comfort, liberty;
When kings and queens, dethron'd, insulted, tried,
Are all these comforts of the poor denied.
There is King Charles, and all his golden rules,
Who prov'd misfortune's was the best of schools;
And there his son, who, tried by years of pain,
Prov'd that misfortunes may be sent in vain.
The magic-mill that grinds the gran'nams young,
Close at the side of kind Godiva hung;
She, of her favourite place the pride and joy,
Of charms at once most lavish and most coy;
By wanton act, the purest fame could raise,
And give the boldest deed, the chastest praise.
There stands the stoutest ox in England fed;
There fights the boldest Jew, Whitechapel-bred;
And here Saint Monday's worthy votaries live,
In all the joys that ale and skittles give.
Now lo! in Egypt's coast that hostile fleet,
By nations dreaded and by Nelson beat;
And here shall soon another triumph come,
A deed of glory in a day of gloom;
Distressing glory! grievous boon of fate!
The proudest conquest, at the dearest rate.

On shelf of deal beside the cuckoo-clock,
Of cottage-reading rests the chosen stock;
Learning we lack, not books, but have a kind
For all our wants, a meat for every mind:
The tale for wonder and the joke for whim,
The half-sung sermon and the half-groan'd hymn.
No need of classing; each within its place,
The feeling finger in the dark can trace;
"First from the corner, farthest from the wall,"
Such all the rules, and they suffice for all.
There pious works for Sunday's use are found,
Companions for that Bible newly bound;
That Bible, bought by sixpence weekly sav'd,
Has choicest prints by famous hands engrav'd;
Has choicest notes by many a famous head,
Such as to doubt, have rustic readers led;
Have made them stop to reason *why?* and *how?*
And where they once agreed, to cavil now.
Oh! rather give me commentators plain,
Who with no deep researches vex the brain;
Who from the dark and doubtful love to run,
And hold their glimmering tapers to the sun;
Who simple truth with nine-fold reasons back,
And guard the point no enemies attack.
Bunyan's fam'd Pilgrim rests that shelf upon,
A genius rare but rude was honest John;
Not one who, early by the muse beguil'd,
Drank from her well, the waters undefil'd;
Not one who slowly gain'd the hill sublime,
Then often sipp'd and little at a time;
But one who dabbled in the sacred springs,
And drank them muddy, mix'd with baser things.
Here to *interpret dreams* we read the rules,
Science our own! and never taught in schools;
In moles and specks we fortune's gifts discern,
And fate's fix'd will from Nature's wanderings learn.
Of hermit Quarle we read in island rare,
Far from mankind and seeming far from care;
Safe from all want, and sound in every limb;
Yes! there was he and there was care with him.
Unbound and heap'd these valued works beside,
Laid humbler works, the pedlar's pack supplied;
Yet these, long since, have all acquir'd a name;
The Wandering Jew has found his way to fame:
And fame, denied to many a labour'd song,
Crowns Thumb the great and Hickerthrift the strong.
There too is he, by wizard-power upheld,
Jack, by whose arm the giant-brood were quell'd;
His shoes of swiftness on his feet he plac'd;
His coat of darkness on his loins he brac'd;
His sword of sharpness in his hand he took,
And off the heads of doughty giants strook;
Their glaring eyes beheld no mortal near;
No sound of feet alarm'd the drowsy ear;
No English blood their pagan sense could smell,
But heads dropt headlong, wondering why they fell.
These are the peasant's joy, when, plac'd at ease,
Half his delighted offspring mount his knees.
To every cot the lord's indulgent mind,
Has a small space for garden-ground assign'd;
Here—till return of morn dismiss'd the farm—
The careful peasant plies the sinewy arm,
Warm'd as he works and casts his look around
On every foot of that improving ground:
It is his own he sees; his master's eye
Peers not about, some secret fault to spy;
Nor voice severe is there, nor censure known;—
Hope, profit, pleasure—they are all his own.
Here grow the humble cives, and hard by them,
The tall leek, tapering with his rushy stem;
High climb his pulse in many an even row,
Deep strike the ponderous roots in soil below,

And herbs of potent smell and pungent taste,
Give a warm relish to the night's repast.
Apples and cherries grafted by his hand,
And cluster'd nuts for neighbouring market stand.
Nor thus concludes his labour; near the cot,
The reed-fence rises round some favourite spot;
Where rich carnations, pinks with purple eyes,
Proud hyacinths, the least some florist's prize,
Tulips tall-stemm'd and pounc'd auriculas rise.
Here on a Sunday-eve, when service ends,
Meet and rejoice a family of friends;
All speak aloud, are happy and are free,
And glad they seem and gaily they agree.
What though fastidious ears may shun the speech,
Where all are talkers and where none can teach;
Where still the welcome and the words are old,
And the same stories are for ever told;
Yet theirs is joy, that, bursting from the heart,
Prompts the glad tongue these nothings to impart;
That forms these tones of gladness we despise,
That lifts their steps, that sparkles in their eyes;
That talks or laughs or runs or shouts or plays,
And speaks in all their looks and all their ways.
Fair scenes of peace! ye might detain us long,
But vice and misery now demand the song;
And turn our view from dwellings simply neat,
To this infected Row, we term our street.
Here, in cabal, a disputatious crew
Each evening meet; the sot, the cheat, the shrew;
Riots are nightly heard;—the curse, the cries
Of beaten wife, perverse in her replies;
While shrieking children hold each threat'ning hand,
And sometimes life, and sometimes food demand:
Boys in their first stol'n rags, to swear begin,
And girls, who heed not dress, are skill'd in gin:
Snarers and smugglers here their gains divide,
Ensnaring females here their victims hide;
And here is one, the sybil of the Row,
Who knows all secrets, or affects to know.
Seeking their fate, to her the simple run,
To her the guilty, theirs awhile to shun;
Mistress of worthless arts, deprav'd in will,
Her care unblest and unrepaid her skill,
Slave to the tribe, to whose command she stoops,
And poorer than the poorest maid she dupes.
Between the road-way and the walls, offence
Invades all eyes and strikes on every sense;
There lie, obscene, at every open door,
Heaps from the hearth and sweepings from the floor;
And day by day the mingled masses grow,
As sinks are disembogu'd and kennels flow.
There hungry dogs from hungry children steal,
There pigs and chickens quarrel for a meal;
There dropsied infants wail without redress,
And all is want and woe and wretchedness:
Yet should these boys, with bodies bronz'd and bare,
High-swoln and hard, outlive that lack of care—
Forc'd on some farm, the unexerted strength,
Though loth to action, is compell'd at length,
When, warm'd by health, as serpents in the spring,
Aside their slough of indolence they fling.
Yet ere they go, a greater evil comes—
See! crowded beds in those contiguous rooms;
Beds but ill parted, by a paltry screen,
Of paper'd lath or curtain dropt between;
Daughters and sons to yon compartments creep,
And parents here beside their children sleep:
Ye who have power, these thoughtless people part,
Nor let the ear be first to taint the heart.
Come! search within, nor sight nor smell regard;
The true physician walks the foulest ward.
See! on the floor, what frowzy patches rest!
What nauseous fragments on yon fractur'd chest!
What downy-dust beneath yon window-seat!
And round these posts that serve this bed for feet;
This bed where all those tatter'd garments lie,
Worn by each sex, and now perforce thrown by!
See! as we gaze, an infant lifts its head,
Left by neglect and burrow'd in that bed;
The mother-gossip has the love suppress,
An infant's cry once waken'd in her breast;
And daily prattles, as her round she takes,
(With strong resentment) of the want she makes.
Whence all these woes?—From want of virtuous will,
Of honest shame, of time-improving skill;
From want of care t' employ the vacant hour,
And want of ev'ry kind but want of power.
Here are no wheels for either wool or flax,
But packs of cards—made up of sundry packs;
Here is no clock, nor will they turn the glass,
And see how swift th' important moments pass;
Here are no books, but ballads on the wall,
Are some abusive, and indecent all:
Pistols are here, unpair'd; with nets and hooks,
Of every kind, for rivers, ponds, and brooks;
An ample flask that nightly rovers fill,
With recent poison from the Dutchman's still;
A box of tools with wires of various size,
Frocks, wigs, and hats, for night or day disguise,
And bludgeons stout to gain or guard a prize.
To every house belongs a space of ground,
Of equal size, once fenc'd with paling round;
That paling now by slothful waste destroy'd,
Dead gorse and stumps of elder fill the void;
Save in the centre-spot, whose walls of clay
Hide sots and striplings at their drink and play;
Within, a board, beneath a til'd retreat,
Allures the bubble and maintains the cheat;
Where heavy ale in spots like varnish shows,
Where chalky tallies yet remain in rows;
Black pipes and broken jugs the seats defile,
The walls and windows, rhymes and reck'nings vile;
Prints of the meanest kind disgrace the door,
And cards, in curses torn, lie fragments on the floor.
Here his poor bird th' inhuman cocker brings,
Arms his hard heel and clips his golden wings;
With spicy food th' impatient spirit feeds,
And shouts and curses as the battle bleeds;
Struck through the brain, depriv'd of both his eyes,
The vanquish'd bird must combat till he dies;
Must faintly peck at his victorious foe,
And reel and stagger at each feeble blow;
When fall'n, the savage grasps his dabbled plumes,
His blood-stain'd arms, for other deaths assumes;
And damns the craven-fowl, that lost his stake,
And only bled and perish'd for his sake.
Such are our peasants, those to whom we yield
Glories unsought, the fathers of the field;
And these who take from our reluctant hands,
What Burn advises or the bench commands.
Our farmers round, well pleas'd with constant gain
Like other farmers, flourish and complain.
These are our groups; our portraits next appear,
And close our exhibition for the year.

With evil omen, we that year begin:
A child of shame—stern justice adds, of sin,
Is first recorded;—I would hide the deed,
But vain the wish; I sigh and I proceed:
And could I well th' instructive truth convey,
'Twould warn the giddy and awake the gay.
Of all the nymphs who gave our village grace,
The miller's daughter had the fairest face;
Proud was the miller; money was his pride,
He rode to market, as our farmers ride;
And 'twas his boast, inspir'd by spirits, there,
His favourite Lucy should be rich as fair;
But she must meek and still obedient prove,
And not presume, without his leave, to love.
A youthful sailor heard him:—"Ha!" quoth he,
"This miller's maiden is a prize for me;
Her charms I love, his riches I desire,
And all his threats but fan the kindling fire;
My ebbing purse no more the foe shall fill,
But love's kind act and Lucy at the mill."
Thus thought the youth, and soon the chase began,
Stretch'd all his sail, nor thought of pause or plan:

His trusty staff, in his bold hand, he took,
Like him and like his frigate, heart of oak;
Fresh were his features, his attire was new;
Clean was his linen and his jacket blue;
Of finest jean his trousers tight and trim,
Brush'd the large buckle at the silver rim.
He soon arriv'd, he trac'd the village-green,
There saw the maid, and was with pleasure seen;
Then talk'd of love, till Lucy's yielding heart
Confess'd 'twas painful, though 'twas right, to part.
"For ah! my father has an haughty soul,
Whom best he loves, he loves but to control;
Me to some churl in bargain he'll consign,
And make some tyrant of the parish, mine;
Cold is his heart, and he with looks severe,
Has often forc'd, but never shed the tear;
Save when my mother died, some drops express'd
A kind of sorrow for a wife at rest:—
To me a master's stern regard is shown,
I'm like his steed, priz'd highly as his own;
Stroak'd but corrected, threaten'd when supplied,
His slave and boast, his victim and his pride."
"Cheer up, my lass! I'll to thy father go,
The miller cannot be the sailor's foe;
Both live by heaven's free gale that plays aloud
In the stretch'd canvass and the piping shroud;
The rush of winds, the flapping sails above,
And rattling planks within, are sounds we love;
Calms are our dread; when tempests plough the deep,
We take a reef, and to the rocking, sleep."
"Ha!" quoth the miller, mov'd at speech so rash,
"Art thou like me? then where thy notes and cash?
Away to Wapping, and a wife command,
With all thy wealth, a guinea, in thine hand;
There with thy messmates quaff the muddy cheer,
And leave my Lucy for thy betters here."
"Revenge! revenge!" the angry lover cried,
Then sought the nymph, and "be thou now my bride."
Bride had she been, but they no priest could move
To bind in law, the couple bound by love.
What sought these lovers then by day, by night?
But stolen moments of disturb'd delight;
Soft trembling tumults, terrors dearly priz'd,
Transport that pain'd and joys that agonis'd:
Till, the fond damsel, pleas'd with lad so trim,
Aw'd by her parent and entic'd by him;
Her lovely form from savage power to save,
Gave—not her hand—but ALL she could, she gave.
Then came the day of shame, the grievous night,
The varying look, the wandering appetite;
The joy assum'd, while sorrow dimm'd the eyes,
The forc'd sad smiles that follow'd sudden sighs;
And every art, long us'd, but us'd in vain,
To hide thy progress, Nature, and thy pain.
Too eager caution shows some danger's near,
The bully's bluster proves the coward's fear;
His sober step, the drunkard vainly tries,
And nymphs expose the failings they disguise.
First, whispering gossips were in parties seen;
Then louder scandal walk'd the village-green;
Next babbling folly told the growing ill,
And busy malice dropt it at the mill.
"Go! to thy curse and mine," the father said,
"Strife and confusion stalk around thy bed;
Want and a wailing brat thy portion be,
Plague to thy fondness, as thy fault to me,
Where skulks the villain?"——
—"On the ocean wide,
My William seeks a portion for his bride."
"Vain be his search! But till the traitor come,
The higler's cottage be thy future home;
There with his ancient shrew and care abide,
And hide thy head, thy shame thou canst not hide."
Day after day were past in grief and pain,
Week after week—nor came the youth again;
Her boy was born—no lads nor lasses came
To grace the rite or give the child a name;
Nor grave conceited nurse, of office proud,
Bore the young Christian roaring through the crowd;
In a small chamber was my office done,
Where blinks through paper'd panes the setting sun;
Where noisy sparrows, perch'd on penthouse near,
Chirp tuneless joy and mock the frequent tear;
Bats on their webby wings in darkness move,
And feebly shriek their melancholy love.
No sailor came; the months in terror fled!
Then news arriv'd; he fought, and he was dead!
At the lone cottage Lucy lives, and still
Walks, for her weekly pittance, to the mill;
A mean seraglio there her father keeps,
Whose mirth insults her, as she stands and weeps:
And sees the plenty, while compell'd to stay,
Her father's pride, become his harlot's prey.
Throughout the lanes, she glides at evening's close,
And softly lulls her infant to repose;
Then sits and gazes but with viewless look,
As gilds the moon the rimpling of the brook;
And sings her vespers, but in voice so low,
She hears their murmurs as the waters flow;
And she too murmurs and begins to find
The solemn wanderings of a wounded mind;
Visions of terror, views of woe succeed,
The mind's impatience, to the body's need;
By turns to that, by turns to this a prey,
She knows what reason yields, and dreads what madness may.
Next with their boy, a decent couple came,
And call'd him Robert, 'twas his father's name;
Three girls preceded, all by time endear'd,
And future births were neither hop'd nor fear'd;
Blest in each other, but to no excess;
Health, quiet, comfort, form'd their happiness;
Love all made up of torture and delight,
Was but mere madness in this couple's sight:
Susan could think, though not without a sigh,
If she were gone, who should her place supply;
And Robert, half in earnest, half in jest,
Talk of her spouse when he should be at rest;
Yet strange would either think it to be told,
Their love was cooling or their hearts were cold:
Few were their acres—but they, well content,
Were on each pay-day, ready with their rent;
And few their wishes—what their farm denied,
The neighbouring town, at trifling cost, supplied;
If at the draper's window, Susan cast
A longing look, as with her goods she pass'd;
And with the produce of the wheel and churn,
Bought her a Sunday-robe on her return;
True to her maxim, she would take no rest,
Till care repay'd that portion to the chest:
Or if, when loitering at the Whitsun-fair,
Her Robert spent some idle shillings there;
Up at the barn, before the break of day,
He made his labour for th' indulgence pay;
Thus both—that waste itself might work in vain—
Wrought double tides, and all was well again.
Yet though so prudent, there were times of joy,
(The day they wed, the christening of the boy),
When to the wealthier farmers there was shown,
Welcome unfeign'd, and plenty like their own;
For Susan serv'd the great, and had some pride,
Among our topmost people to preside;
Yet in that plenty, in that welcome free,
There was the guiding nice frugality;
That in the festal as the frugal day,
Has in a different mode, a sovereign sway:
As tides the same attractive influence know
In the least ebb and in their proudest flow;
The wise frugality that does not give,
A life to saving but that saves to live,
Sparing not pinching, mindful though not mean,
O'er all presiding, yet in nothing seen.

Recorded next a babe of love I trace!
Of many loves, the mother's fresh disgrace;—
"Again, thou harlot! could not all thy pain,
All my reproof, thy wanton thoughts restrain?"
"Alas! your reverence, wanton thoughts, I grant,
Were once my motive, now the thoughts of want;

Women like me, as ducks in a decoy,
Swim down a stream, and seem to swim in joy ;
Your sex pursue us and our own disdain,
Return is dreadful and escape is vain.
Would men forsake us, and would women strive
To help the fall'n, their virtue might revive."
For rite of churching soon she made her way,
In dread of scandal, should she miss the day :—
Two matrons came ! with them she humbly knelt,
Their action copied and their comforts felt,
From that great pain and peril to be free,
Though still in peril of that pain to be ;
Alas ! what numbers like this amorous dame,
Are quick to censure, but are dead to shame !

Twin-infants then appear, a girl, a boy,
Th' o'erflowing cup of Gerard Ablett's joy :
Seven have I nam'd, and but six years have passed
By him and Judith since I bound them fast ;
Well pleas'd, the bridegroom smil'd to hear—"a vine
Fruitful and spreading round the walls be thine,
And branch-like be thine offspring !"—Gerard then
Look'd joyful love, and softly said, "Amen."
Now of that vine he would no more increase,
Those playful branches now disturb his peace ;
Them he beholds around his table spread,
But finds, the more the branch, the less the bread ;
And while they run his humble walls about,
They keep the sunshine of good-humour out.
Cease, man, to grieve ! thy master's lot survey,
Whom wife and children, thou and thine obey ;
A farmer proud, beyond a farmer's pride,
Of all around the envy or the guide ;
Who trots to market on a steed so fine,
That when I meet him, I'm asham'd of mine ;
Whose board is high up-heap'd with generous fare,
Which five stout sons and three tall daughters share :
Cease, man, to grieve, and listen to his care.
A few years fled, and all thy boys shall be
Lords of a cot, and labourers like thee ;
Thy girls unportioned neighbouring youths shall lead,
Brides from my church, and thenceforth thou art freed :
But then thy master shall of cares complain,
Care after care, a long connected train ;
His sons for farms shall ask a large supply,
For farmers' sons each gentle miss shall sigh ;
Thy mistress, reasoning well of life's decay,
Shall ask a chaise and hardly brook delay ;
The smart young cornet, who, with so much grace,
Rode in the ranks and betted at the race,
While the vext parent rails at deed so rash,
Shall d—n his luck, and stretch his hand for cash.
Sad troubles, Gerard ! now pertain to thee,
When thy rich master seems from trouble free ;
But 'tis one fate at different times assign'd,
And cares from thee departing, he must find.

"Ah !" quoth our village grocer, rich and old,
"Would ! I might one such cause for care, behold !"
To whom his friend, "Mine greater bless would be,
Would heav'n take those, my spouse assigns to me."

Aged were both, that Dawkins, Ditchem this,
Who much of marriage thought and much amiss ;
Both would delay, the one, till—riches gain'd,
The son he wish'd might be to honour train'd ;
His friend—lest fierce intruding heirs should come,
To waste his hoard and vex his quiet home.
Dawkins, a dealer once on burthen'd back,
Bore his whole substance in a pedlar's pack ;
To dames discreet, the duties yet unpaid,
His stores of lace and hyson he convey'd :
When thus enrich'd, he chose at home to stop
And fleece his neighbours in a new-built shop ;
Then woo'd a spinster blithe, and hop'd, when wed,
For love's fair favours and a fruitful bed.
Not so his friend ;—on widow fair and staid,
He fix'd his eye, but he was much afraid ;
Yet woo'd ; while she, his hair of silver hue
Demurely notic'd and her eye withdrew ;
Doubtful he paus'd—"Ah ! were I sure," he cried,
"No craving children would my gains divide ;
Fair as she is, I would my widow take,
And live more largely for my partner's sake."
With such their views, some thoughtful years they pass'd,
And hoping, dreading, they were bound at last.
And what their fate ! Observe them as they go,
Comparing fear with fear and woe with woe.
"Ah ! Humphrey ! Humphrey ! Envy in my breast,
Sickens to see thee in thy children blest ;
They are thy joys, while I go grieving home,
To a sad spouse and our eternal gloom ;
We look despondency ; no infant near,
To bless the eye or win the parent's ear ;
Our sudden heats and quarrels to allay,
And soothe the petty sufferings of the day :
Alike our want, yet both the want reprove,
Where are, I cry, these pledges of our love ?
When she, like Jacob's wife, makes fierce reply,
Yet fond—oh ! give me children or I die ;
And I return—still childless doom'd to live,
Like the vex'd patriarch—Are they mine to give ?
Ah ! much I envy thee, thy boys who ride
On poplar branch and canter at thy side ;
And girls, whose cheeks thy chin's fierce fondness know,
And with fresh beauty at the coutact, glow."
"Oh simple friend," said Humphrey, "would'st thou gain,
A father's pleasure, by an husband's pain ?
Alas ! what pleasure—when some vig'rous boy
Should swell thy pride, some rosy girl thy joy ?
Is it to doubt, who grafted this sweet flower,
Or whence arose that spirit and that power ?
"Four years I've wed ; not one has pass'd in vain :
Behold the fifth ! Behold, a babe again !
My wife's gay friends th' unwelcome imp admire,
And fill the room with gratulation dire ;
While I in silence sate, revolving all
That influence ancient men, or that befall ;
A gay pert guest—heaven knows his business—came ;
A glorious boy, he cried, and what the name ?
Angry I growl'd, My spirit cease to tease,
Name it yourselves—Cain, Judas, if you please,
His father's give him, should you that explore,
The devil's or yours :—I said, and sought the door.
My tender partner not a word or sigh
Gives to my wrath, nor to my speech reply ;
But takes her comforts, triumphs in my pain,
And looks undaunted for a birth again."
Heirs thus denied afflict the pining heart,
And thus afforded, jealous pangs impart ;
To prove these arrows of the giant's hand,
Are not for man to stay or to command.
Then with their infants three, the parents came,
And each assign'd—'twas all they had—a name :
Names of no mark or price ; of them not one
Shall court our view on the sepulchral stone ;
Or stop the clerk, th' engraven scrolls to spell,
Or keep the sexton from the sermon-bell.

An orphan girl succeeds : ere she was born,
Her father died, her mother on that morn ;
The pious mistress of the school sustains
Her parents' part, nor their affection feigns,
But pitying feels : with due respect and joy,
I trace the matron at her lov'd employ ;
What time the striplings wearied ev'n with play,
Part at the closing of the summer's day,
And each by different path, returns the well-known way.
Then I behold her at her cottage-door,
Frugal of light ;—her Bible laid before,
When on her double duty she proceeds,
Of time as frugal ;—knitting as she reads :
Her idle neighbours who approach to tell
Of news or nothing, her grave looks compel,
To hear reluctant—while the lads who pass,
In pure respect, walk silent on the grass ;

Then sinks the day, but not to rest she goes,
Till solemn prayers the daily duties close.

But I digress, and lo! an infant-train
Appear, and call me to my task again.
"Why Lonicera wilt thou name thy child?"
I ask'd the gardener's wife, in accents mild:
"We have a right," replied the sturdy dame;—
And Lonicera was the infant's name.
If next a son shall yield our gardener joy,
Then Hyacinthus shall be that fair boy;
And if a girl, they will at length agree,
That Belladonna that fair maid shall be.
High-sounding words our worthy gardener gets,
And at his club to wondering swains repeats;
He then of Rhus and Rhododendron speaks,
And Allium call his onions and his leeks;
Nor weeds are now, for whence arose the weed,
Scarce plants, fair herbs, and curious flowers proceed;
Where Cuckoo-pints and Dandelions sprung,
(Gross names had they our plainer sires among;
There Arums, there Leontodons we view,
And Artemisia grows, where Wormwood grew.
But though no weed exists, his garden round,
From Rumex strong our gardener frees his ground,
Takes soft Senicio from the yielding land,
And grasps the arm'd Urtica in his hand.
Not Darwin's self had more delight to sing
Of floral courtship, in th' awaken'd spring;
Than Peter Pratt, who simpering loves to tell,
How rise the stamens, as the pistils swell;
How bend and curl the moist-top to the spouse,
And give and take the vegetable vows;
How those esteem'd of old, but tips and chives,
Are tender husbands and obedient wives;
Who live and love within the sacred bower—
That bridal bed, the vulgar term a flower.
Hear Peter proudly, to some humble friend,
A wondrous secret, in his science lend;—
"Would you advance the nuptial hour, and bring
The fruit of autumn, with the flowers of spring;
View that light frame where Cucumis lies spread,
And trace the husbands in their golden bed,
Three powder'd anthers;—then no more delay,
But to the stigma's top, their dust convey;
Then by thyself, from prying glance secure,
Twirl the full tip and make your purpose sure;
A long-abiding race the deed shall pay,
Nor one unblest abortion pine away."
T' admire their friend's discourse our swains agree,
And call it science and philosophy.
'Tis good, 'tis pleasant, through th' advancing year,
To see unnumber'd growing forms appear;
What leafy-life from earth's broad bosom rise!
What insect-myriads seek the summer skies!
What scaly tribes in every streamlet move!
What plumy people sing in every grove!
All with the year awak'd, to life, delight and love.
Then names are good, for how, without their aid
Is knowledge, gain'd by man, to man convey'd?
But from that source shall all our pleasure flow?
Shall all our knowledge be those names to know?
Then he, with memory blest, shall bear away
The palm from Grew, and Middleton, and Ray;
No! let us rather seek in grove and field,
What food for wonder, what for use they yield;
Some just remark from Nature's people bring,
And some new source of homage for her King.

Pride lives with all; strange names our rustics give
To helpless infants, that their own may live;
Pleas'd to be known, some notice they will claim,
And find some bye-way to the house of fame.
The straightest furrow lifts the ploughman's heart,
The hat he gain'd has warmth for head and heart;
The bowl that beats the greater number down,
Of tottering nine-pins, gives to fame the clown;
Or foil'd in these, he opes his ample jaws,
And lets a frog leap down to gain applause;
Or grins for hours, or tipples for a week,
Or challenges a well-pinch'd pig, to squeak;
Some idle deed, some child's preposterous name,
Shall make him known and give his folly, fame.
To name an infant met our village-sires,
Assembled all, as such event requires;
Frequent and full, the rural sages sate,
And speakers many urg'd the long debate—
Some harden'd knaves, who rov'd the country round,
Had left a babe within the parish-bound.
First, of the fact they question'd—"Was it true?"
The child was brought—"What then remain'd to do?
Was't dead or living?" this was fairly prov'd,
'Twas pinch'd, it roar'd, and every doubt remov'd;
Then by what name the unwelcome guest to call,
Was long a question, and it pos'd them all:
For he who lent a name to babe unknown,
Censorious men might take it for his own;
They look'd about, they ask'd the name of all,
And not one Richard answer'd to the call;
Next they inquir'd the day, when passing by,
Th' unlucky peasant heard the stranger's cry;
This known; how food and raiment they might give,
Was next debated—for the rogue would live;
At last with all their words and work content,
Back to their homes, the prudent vestry went,
And Richard Monday to the workhouse sent.
There was he pinch'd and pitied, thump'd and fed,
And duly took his beatings and his bread;
Patient in all control, in all abuse,
He found contempt and kicking have their use:
Sad, silent, supple; bending to the blow,
A slave of slaves, the lowest of the low;
His pliant soul gave way to all things base,
He knew no shame, he dreaded no disgrace:
It seem'd, so well his passions he suppress'd,
No feeling stirr'd his ever-torpid breast;
Him might the meanest pauper bruise and cheat,
He was a footstool for the beggar's feet;
His were the legs that ran at all commands;
They used on all occasions, Richard's hands;
His very soul was not his own; he stole
As others order'd, and without a dole;
In all disputes, on either part he lied,
And freely pledg'd his oath on either side;
In all rebellions Richard join'd the rest,
In all detections Richard first confess'd;
Yet though disgrac'd, he watch'd his time so well,
He rose in favour, when in fame he fell;
Base was his usage, vile his whole employ,
And all despis'd and fed the pliant boy:
At length, "'tis time he should abroad be sent,"
Was whisper'd near him—and abroad he went;
One morn they call'd him, Richard answer'd not,
They doom'd him hanging, and in time forgot—
Yet miss'd him long, as each, throughout the clan,
Found he "had better spar'd a better man."
Now Richard's talents for the world were fit,
He'd no small cunning and had some small wit;
Had that calm look which seem'd to all assent,
And that complacent speech which nothing meant;
He'd but one care, and that he strove to hide,
How best for Richard Monday to provide;
Steel, through opposing plates, the magnet draws,
And steelly atoms culls from dust and straws;
And thus our hero, to his interest true,
Gold through all bars and from each trifle drew;
But still more surely round the world to go,
This fortune's child had neither friend nor foe.
Long lost to us, at last our man we trace,
Sir Richard Monday died at Monday-place;
His lady's worth, his daughter's we peruse,
And find his grandsons all as rich as Jews;
He gave reforming charities a sum,
And bought the blessings of the blind and dumb;
Bequeath'd to missions money from the stocks,
And bibles issu'd from his private box;
But to his native place severely just,
He left a pittance bound in rigid trust;

Two paltry pounds, on every quarter's-day,
(At church produc'd) for forty loaves should pay;
A stinted gift, that to the parish shows,
He kept in mind their bounty and their blows!

To farmers three, the year has giv'n a son,
Finch on the Moor, and French and Middleton;
Twice in this year a female Giles I see,
A Spalding once, and once a Barnaby;
An humble man is he, and when they meet,
Our farmers find him on a distant seat;
There for their wit he serves a constant theme,
"They praise his dairy, they extol his team,
They ask the price of each unrivall'd steed,
And whence his sheep, that admirable breed;
His thriving arts they beg he would explain,
And where he puts the money he must gain:—
They have their daughters, but they fear their friend
Would think his sons too much would condescend;—
They have their sons who would their fortunes try,
But fear his daughters will their suit deny."
So runs the joke, while James, with sigh profound,
And face of care, keeps looking on the ground;
These looks and sighs provoke the insult more,
And point the jest—for Barnaby is poor.

Last in my list, five untaught lads appear;
Their father dead, compassion sent them here;
For still that rustic infidel denied,
To have their names with solemn rite applied:
His, a lone house, by Dead-man's Dyke-way stood;
And his, a nightly haunt, in Lonely-wood;
Each village inn has heard the ruffian boast
That he believ'd "in neither God nor ghost;
That when the sod upon the sinner press'd,
He, like the saint, had everlasting rest;
That never priest believ'd his doctrines true,
But would, for profit, own himself a Jew,
Or worship wood and stone, as honest heathen do;
That fools alone on future worlds rely,
And all who die for faith, deserve to die."
These maxims—part th' attorney's clerk profess'd,
His own transcendant genius found the rest.
Our pious matrons heard, and, much amaz'd,
Gaz'd on the man and trembled as they gaz'd;
And now his face explor'd, and now his feet,
Man's dreaded foe, in this bad man, to meet:
But him our drunkards as their champion rais'd,
Their bishop call'd, and as their hero prais'd;
Though most when sober, and the rest, when sick,
Had little question, whence his bishopric.
But he, triumphant spirit! all things dar'd,
He poach'd the wood and on the warren snar'd;
'Twas his, at cards, each novice to trepan,
And call the wants of rogues the rights of man;
Wild as the winds, he let his offspring rove,
And deem'd the marriage-bond the bane of love.
What age and sickness for a man so bold,
Had done, we know not;—none beheld him old:
By night as business urg'd, he sought the wood,
The ditch was deep, the rain had caus'd a flood;
The foot-bridge fail'd, he plung'd beneath the deep,
And slept, if truth were his, th' eternal sleep.

These have we nam'd; on life's rough sea they sail,
With many a prosperous, many an adverse gale!
Where passion soon, like powerful winds, will rage,
While wearied prudence with their strength engage;
Then each, in aid, shall some companion ask,
For help or comfort in the tedious task;
And what that help—what joys from union flow,
What good or ill, we next prepare to show;
And row, meantime, our weary bark ashore,
As Spencer his—but not with Spencer's oar.*

* Allusions of this kind are to be found in the Fairy-Queen. See the end of the first book, and other places.

PART II.—Marriages.

Dispos'd to wed, ev'n while you hasten, stay;
There's great advantage in a small delay:
Thus Ovid sang, and much the wise approve
This prudent maxim of the priest of love:
If poor, delay for future want prepares,
And eases humble life of half its cares;
If rich, delay shall brace the thoughtful mind,
T' endure the ills that ev'n the happiest find:
Delay shall knowledge yield on either part,
And show the value of the vanquish'd heart:
The humours, passions, merits, failings, prove,
And gently raise the veil that's worn by love;
Love, that impatient guide!—too proud to think
Of vulgar wants, of clothing, meat and drink,
Urges our amorous swains their joys to seize,
And then at rags and hunger, frighten'd flees:
Yet not too long in cold debate remain,
Till age, refrain not—but if old, refrain.

By no such rule would Gaffer Kirk be tried;
First in the year he led a blooming bride,
And stood a wither'd elder at her side.
Oh! Nathan! Nathan! at thy years, trepann'd,
To take a wanton harlot by the hand!
Thou, who wert us'd so tartly to express
Thy sense of matrimonial happiness,
Till every youth, whose banns at church were read,
Strove not to meet, or meeting, hung his head;
And every lass forbore at thee to look,
A sly old fish, too cunning for the hook;—
And now at sixty, that pert dame to see,
Of all thy savings mistress, and of thee;
Now will the lads, rememb'ring insults past,
Cry, "What, the wise-one in the trap at last!"
Fie! Nathan, fie! to let an artful jade,
The close recesses of thine heart invade;
What grievous pangs! what suffering she'll impart,
And fill with anguish that rebellious heart;
For thou wilt strive incessantly, in vain,
By threat'ning speech, thy freedom to regain;
But she for conquest married, nor will prove
A dupe to thee, thine anger, or thy love;
Clamorous her tongue will be;—of either sex,
She'll gather friends around thee and perplex
Thy doubtful soul;—thy money she will waste,
In costly frippery cull'd with vulgar taste;
And will be happy to exert her power,
In every eye, in thine, at every hour.
Then wilt thou bluster—"No! thou wilt not rest,
And see consum'd each shilling of thy chest:"
Thou wilt be valiant—"when her cousins call,
Thou wilt abuse and shut thy door on all:"
Thou wilt be cruel!—"what the law allows,
That be thy portion, my ungrateful spouse!
Nor other shillings shalt thou then receive,
And when I die"——"what! may I this believe?
Are these true tender tears? and does my Kitty grieve?
Ah! crafty vixen, thine old man has fears;
But weep no more! I'm melted by thy tears;
Spare but my money, thou shalt rule ME still,
And see thy cousins——there! I burn the will."
Thus with example sad, our year began,
A wanton vixen and a weary man;
"But had this tale in other guise been told,"
Young let the lover be, the lady old,
And that disparity of years shall prove
No bane of peace, although some bar to love:
'Tis not the worst, our nuptial ties among,
That joins the ancient bride and bridegroom young;—
Young wives, like changing winds, their power display,
By shifting points and varying day by day;
Now zephyrs mild, now whirlwinds in their force,
They sometimes speed, but often thwart our course:
And much experienc'd should that pilot be,
Who sails with them on life's tempestuous sea:
But like a trade-wind is the ancient dame,
Mild to your wish and every day the same;

Steady as time, no sudden squalls you fear,
But set full-sail and with assurance steer;
Till every danger in your way be pass'd,
And then she gently, mildly breathes her last;
Rich you arrive, in port awhile remain,
And for a second venture sail again.

For this, blithe Donald southward made his way,
And left the lasses on the banks of Tay;
Him to a neighbouring garden fortune sent,
Whom we beheld, aspiringly content:
Patient and mild he sought the dame to please,
Who rul'd the kitchen and who bore the keys;
Fair Lucy first, the laundry's grace and pride,
With smiles and gracious looks, her fortune tried;
But all in vain she prais'd his "pawky een,"
Where never fondness was for Lucy seen;
Him the mild Susan, boast of dairies, lov'd,
And found him civil, cautious, and unmov'd;
From many a fragrant simple, Catharine's skill
Drew oil, and essence from the boiling still;
But not her warmth, nor all her winning ways,
From his cool phlegm could Donald's spirit raise;
Of beauty heedless, with the merry mute,
To Mistress Dobson he preferr'd his suit;
There prov'd his service, there address'd his vows,
And saw her mistress—friend—protectress—spouse;
A butler now, he thanks his powerful bride,
And like her keys keeps constant at her side.

Next at our altar stood a luckless pair,
Brought by strong passions and a warrant there;
By long rent cloak, hung loosely, strove the bride,
From ev'ry eye, what all perceiv'd, to hide.
While the boy-bridegroom, shuffling in his pace,
Now hid awhile and then expos'd his face;
As shame alternately with anger strove,
The brain, confus'd with muddy ale, to move;
In haste and stammering he perform'd his part,
And look'd the rage that rankled in his heart;
(So will each lover inly curse his fate,
Too soon made happy and made wise too late);
I saw his features take a savage gloom,
And deeply threaten for the days to come;
Low spake the lass, and lisp'd and minc'd the while,
Look'd on the lad and faintly tried to smile;
With soft'ned speech and humbled tone she strove
To stir the embers of departed love;
While he a tyrant, frowning walk'd before,
Felt the poor purse and sought the public-door,
She sadly following in submission went,
And saw the final shilling foully spent;
Then to her father's hut the pair withdrew,
And bade to love and comfort long adieu!
Ah! fly temptation, youth, refrain! refrain!
I preach for ever; but I preach in vain!

Two summers since, I saw at Lammas fair,
The sweetest flower that ever blossom'd there;
When Phœbe Dawson gaily cross'd the green,
In haste to see and happy to be seen;
Her air, her manners, all who saw, admir'd;
Courteous though coy, and gentle though retir'd;
The joy of youth and health her eyes display'd,
And ease of heart her every look convey'd;
A native skill her simple robes express'd,
As with untutor'd elegance she dress'd;
The lads around admir'd so fair a sight,
And Phœbe felt, and felt she gave, delight.
Admirers soon of every age she gain'd,
Her beauty won them and her worth retain'd;
Envy itself could no contempt display,
They wish'd her well, whom yet they wish'd away;
Correct in thought, she judg'd a servant's place
Preserv'd a rustic beauty from disgrace;
But yet on Sunday-eve, in freedom's hour,
With secret joy she felt that beauty's power;
When some proud bliss upon the heart would steal,
That, poor or rich, a beauty still must feel.

At length, the youth, ordain'd to move her breast,
Before the swains with bolder spirit press'd;
With looks less timid made his passion known,
And pleas'd by manners, most unlike her own;
Loud though in love, and confident though young;
Fierce in his air, and voluble of tongue;
By trade a tailor, though, in scorn of trade,
He served the squire, and brush'd the coat he made;
Yet now, would Phœbe her consent afford,
Her slave alone, again he'd mount the board;
With her should years of growing love be spent,
And growing wealth:—She sigh'd, and look'd consent.
Now, through the lane, up hill, and cross the green,
(Seen by but few and blushing to be seen—
Dejected, thoughtful, anxious, and afraid,)
Led by the lover, walk'd the silent maid:
Slow through the meadows rov'd they, many a mile,
Toy'd by each bank and trifled at each stile;
Where, as he painted every blissful view,
And highly colour'd what he strongly drew,
The pensive damsel, prone to tender fears,
Dimm'd the false prospect with prophetic tears:
Thus pass'd th' allotted hours, till lingering late,
The lover loiter'd at the master's gate;
There he pronounc'd adieu! and yet would stay,
Till chidden—sooth'd—entreated—forc'd away;
He would of coldness, though indulg'd, complain,
And oft retire and oft return again;
When, if his teasing vex'd her gentle mind,
The grief assum'd, compell'd her to be kind!
For he would proof of plighted kindness crave,
That she resented first, and then forgave,
And to his grief and penance yielded more,
Than his presumption had requir'd before:—
Ah! fly temptation, youth, refrain! refrain!
Each yielding maid and each presuming swain!

Lo! now with red rent cloak and bonnet black,
And torn green gown loose hanging at her back,
One who an infant in her arms sustains,
And seems in patience, striving with her pains;
Pinch'd are her looks, as one who pines for bread,
Whose cares are growing and whose hopes are fled;
Pale her parch'd lips, her heavy eyes sunk low,
And tears unnotic'd from their channels flow;
Serene her manner, till some sudden pain
Frets the meek soul, and then she's calm again;—
Her broken pitcher to the pool she takes,
And every step with cautious terror makes;
For not alone that infant in her arms,
But nearer cause, her anxious soul alarms;
With water burthen'd, then she picks her way,
Slowly and cautious, in the clinging clay;
Till, in mid-green, she trusts a place unsound,
And deeply plunges in th' adhesive ground;
Thence, but with pain, her slender foot she takes,
While hope the mind as strength the frame forsakes:
For when so full the cup of sorrow grows,
Add but a drop, it instantly o'erflows.
And now her path but not her peace she gains,
Safe from her task, but shivering with her pains;
Her home she reaches, open leaves the door,
And placing first her infant on the floor,
She bares her bosom to the wind, and sits,
And sobbing struggles with the rising fits;
In vain, they come, she feels th' inflating grief,
That shuts the swelling bosom from relief;
That speaks in feeble cries a soul distrest,
Or the sad laugh that cannot be represt;
The neighbour-matron leaves her wheel, and flies
With all the aid her poverty supplies;
Unfee'd, the calls of nature she obeys,
Not led by profit, not allur'd by praise;
And waiting long, till these contentions cease,
She speaks of comfort and departs in peace.
Friend of distress! the mourner feels thy aid,
She cannot pay thee, but thou wilt be paid.

But who this child of weakness, want, and care?
'Tis Phœbe Dawson, pride of Lammas fair;

Who took her lover for his sparkling eyes,
Expressions warm, and love-inspiring lies:
Compassion first assail'd her gentle heart,
For all his suffering, all his bosom's smart:
"And then his prayers! they would a savage move,
And win the coldest of the sex to love:"—
But ah! too soon his looks success declar'd,
Too late her loss the marriage-rite repair'd;
The faithless flatterer then his vows forgot,
A captious tyrant or a noisy sot:
If present, railing, till he saw her pain'd;
If absent, spending what their labours gain'd;
Till that fair form in want and sickness pin'd,
And hope and comfort fled that gentle mind.
Then fly temptation, youth; resist, refrain!
Nor let me preach for ever and in vain!

Next came a well-dressed pair, who left their coach,
And made, in long procession, slow approach:
For, this gay bride had many a female friend,
And youths were there, this favour'd youth t'attend:
Silent, nor wanting due respect, the crowd
Stood humbly round and gratulation bow'd;
But not that silent crowd, in wonder fixed,
Not numerous friends, who praise and envy mix'd,
Nor nymphs attending near to swell the pride
Of one more fair, the ever-smiling bride;
Nor that gay bride adorn'd with every grace,
Nor love nor joy triumphant in her face,
Could from the youth's, sad signs of sorrow chase:
Why didst thou grieve? Wealth, pleasure, freedom thine;
Vex'd it thy soul, that Freedom to resign?
Spake scandal truth? "Thou didst not then intend,
So soon to bring thy wooing to an end?"
Or was it, as our prating rustics say,
To end as soon, but in a different way?
'Tis told thy Phyllis is a skilful dame,
Who play'd uninjured with the dangerous flame:
That while, like Lovelace, thou thy coat display'd
And hid the snare, prepar'd to catch the maid,
Thee with her net, she found the means to catch,
And at the amorous see-saw, won the match;*
Yet others tell, the captain fix'd thy doubt,
He'd call thee brother, or he'd call thee out:—
But rest the motive—all retreat too late,
Joy like thy bride's should on thy brow have sate;
The deed had then appear'd thine own intent,
A glorious day, by gracious fortune sent,
In each revolving year to be in triumph spent.
Then in few weeks that cloudy brow had been,
Without a wonder or a whisper seen;
And none had been so weak as to inquire,
"Why pouts my lady?" or "why frowns the squire?"

How fair these names, how much unlike they look
To all the blurr'd subscriptions in my book;
The bridegroom's letters stand in row above,
Tapering yet stout, like pine-trees in his grove;
While free and fine the bride's appear below,
As light and slender as her jasmines grow;
Mark now in what confusion, stoop or stand,
The crooked scrawls of many a clownish hand,
Now out, now in, they droop, they fall, they rise,
Like raw recruits drawn forth for exercise;
Ere yet reform'd and modell'd by the drill,
The freeborn legs stand striding as they will.
Much have I tried to guide the fist along,
But still the blunderers plac'd their blottings wrong:
Behold these marks uncouth! how strange that men,
Who guide the plough, should fail to guide the pen;
For half a mile, the furrows even lie;
For half an inch, the letters stand awry;—
Is it that, strong and sturdy in the field,
They scorn the arms of idle men to wield;
Or give that hand to guide the goosequill-tip,
That rules a team and brandishes a whip?

* Clarissa, vol. vii. Lovelace's Letter.

The lions they, whom conscious powers forbid,
To play the ape and "dandle with the kid."
But yet, small arts have charms for female eyes;
Our rustic nymphs, the beau and scholar prize;
Unletter'd swains and ploughmen coarse, they slight,
For those who dress and amorous scrolls indite.

For Bridget Dawdle happier days had been,
Had footman Daniel scorn'd his native green;
Or when he came an idle coxcomb down,
Had he his love reserv'd for lass in town;
To Roger Pluck she then had pledg'd her truth—
A sturdy, sober, kind, unpolish'd youth;
But from the day, that fatal day she spied
The pride of Daniel, Daniel was her pride.
In all concerns was Roger just and true,
But coarse his doublet was and patched in view,
And felt his stockings were and blacker than his shoe;
While Daniel's linen all was fine and fair—
His master wore it and he deign'd to wear;—
(To wear his livery, some respect might prove;
To wear his linen, must be sign of love;)
Blue was his coat, unsoil'd by spot or stain;
His hose were silk, his shoes of Spanish grain;
A silver knot, his breadth of shoulder bore;
A diamond buckle blaz'd his breast before;
Diamond he swore it was! and show'd it as he swore:
Rings on his fingers shone; his milk-white hand
Could pick-tooth case and box for snuff command:
And thus, with clouded cane, a fop complete,
He stalk'd, the jest and glory of the street:
Join'd with these powers he could so sweetly sing,
Talk with such toss and saunter with such swing;
Laugh with such glee and trifle with such art,
That Bridget's promise fail'd to shield her heart.
Roger, meantime, to ease his amorous cares,
Fix'd his full mind upon his farm's affairs;
Two pigs, a cow, and wethers half a score,
Increas'd his stock, and still he look'd for more;
He, for his acres few, so duly paid,
That yet more acres to his lot were laid;
Till our chaste nymphs no longer felt disdain,
And prudent matrons prais'd the frugal swain;
Who thriving well, through many a fruitful year
Now cloth'd himself anew, and acted overseer.
Just then poor Bridget from her friend in town,
Fled in pure fear, and came a beggar down;
Trembling at Roger's door, she knock'd for bread—
Was chidden first, next pitied, and then fed;
Then sat at Roger's board, then shar'd in Roger's bed:
All hope of marriage lost in her disgrace,
He mourns a flame reviv'd, and she a love of lace.

Now to be wed, a well-match'd couple came;
Twice had old Lodge been tied, and twice the dame;
Tottering they came and toying (odious scene!),
And fond and simple, as they'd always been.
Children, from wedlock we by laws restrain;
Why not prevent them, when they're such again?
Why not forbid the doating souls, to prove,
Th' indecent fondling of preposterous love?
In spite of prudence, uncontroll'd by shame,
The amorous senior woos the toothless dame,
Relating idly, at the closing eve,
The youthful follies he disdains to leave;
Till youthful follies wake a transient fire,
When arm in arm, they totter and retire.
So a fond pair of solemn birds, all day,
Blink in their seat, and dose the hours away;
Then, by the moon awaken'd, forth they move,
And fright the songsters with their cheerless love.
So two sear trees, dry, stunted, and unsound,
Each other catch, when dropping to the ground;
Entwine their wither'd arms 'gainst wind and weather,
And shake their leafless heads and drop together.
So two dead limbs, touch'd by Galvani's wire,
Move with new life, and feel awaken'd fire;
Quivering awhile, their flaccid forms remain,
Then turn to cold torpidity again.

"But ever frowns your Hymen ? man and maid,
Are all repenting, suffering, or betray'd ?"
Forbid it, love ! we have our couples here,
Who hail the day in each revolving year :
These are with us, as in the world around ;
They are not frequent, but they may be found.
Our farmers too, what though they fail to prove,
In Hymen's bonds, the tenderest slaves of love,
(Nor, like those pairs whom sentiment unites,
Feel they the fervour of the mind's delights ;)
Yet coarsely kind and comfortably gay,
They heap the board and hail the happy day ;
And though the bride, now freed from school, admits
Of pride implanted there, some transient fits ;
Yet soon she casts her girlish flights aside,
And in substantial blessings rests her pride.
No more she plays, no more attempts to fit
Her steps responsive to the squeaking kit ;
No more recites her French, the hinds among,
But chides her maidens in her mother-tongue ;
Her tambour-frame she leaves and diet spare,
Plain-work and plenty with her house to share ;
Till, all her varnish lost, in few short years,
In all her worth, the farmer's wife appears.
Yet not the ancient kind ; nor she who gave
Her soul to gain—a mistress and a slave ;
Who not to sleep allow'd the needful time !
To whom repose was loss, and sport a crime ;
Who in her meanest room (and all were mean),
A noisy drudge, from morn till night was seen ;—
But she, the daughter, boasts a decent room,
Adorn'd with carpet, form'd in Wilton's loom ;
Fair prints along the paper'd wall are spread ;
There, Werter sees the sportive children fed,
And Charlotte here, bewails her lover dead.
'Tis here, assembled, while in room apart
Their husbands drinking warm the opening heart,
Our neighbouring dames, on festal days, unite
With tongues more fluent and with hearts as light
Theirs is that art, which English wives alone,
Profess—a boast and privilege their own ;
An art it is, where each at once attends
To all, and claims attention from her friends,
When they engage the tongue, the eye, the ear ;
Reply when list'ning, and when speaking hear :
The ready converse knows no dull delays,
"But double are the pains, and double be the praise."*

Yet not to those alone who bear command,
Heav'n gives a heart to hail the marriage band ;
Among their servants, we the pairs can show,
Who much to love and more to prudence owe :
Reuben and Rachel, though as fond as doves,
Were yet discreet and cautious in their loves ;
Nor would attend to Cupid's wild commands,
Till cool reflection bade them join their hands ;
When both were poor, they thought it argued ill
Of hasty love to make them poorer still ;
Year after year, with savings long laid by,
They bought the future dwelling's full supply :
Her frugal fancy cull'd the smaller ware,
The weightier purchase ask'd her Reuben's care ;
Together then their last year's gain they threw,
And lo ! an auction'd bed, with curtains neat and new.
Thus both, as prudence counsell'd, wisely stay'd,
And cheerful then the calls of love obey'd :
What if, when Rachel gave her hand, 'twas one
Embrown'd by winter's ice and summer's sun ;
What if, in Reuben's hair, the female eye
Usurping grey among the black could spy ;
What if in both, life's bloomy flush was lost,
And their full autumn felt the mellowing frost ;
Yet time, who blow'd the rose of youth away,
Had left the vigorous stem without decay ;
Like those tall elms, in farmer Frankford's ground,
They'll grow no more—but all their growth is sound ;
By time confirmed and rooted in the land,
The storms they've stood, still promise they shall stand.

These are the happier pairs, their life has rest,
Their hopes are strong, their humble portion blest ;
While those more rash to hasty marriage led,
Lament th' impatience which now stints their bread ;
When such their union, years of pain they know,
Their joys come seldom and their pains pass slow ;
In health just fed, in sickness just reliev'd ;
By hardships harass'd and by children griev'd ;
In petty quarrels and in peevish strife,
The once fond couple waste the spring of life ;
But when to age mature those children grown,
Find hopes and homes and hardships of their own ;
The harass'd couple feel their lingering woes
Then passing off, and find, at length, repose.
Complaints and murmurs then are laid aside,
(By reason these subdued and those by pride,)
And calm in cares with patience man and wife,
Agree to share the bitter-sweet of life ;
(Life that has sorrow much and sorrow's cure,
Where they who most enjoy shall much endure ;)
Their rest, their labour, duties, sufferings, prayers,
Compose the soul and fit it for its cares ;
Their graves before them and their griefs behind,
Have each a med'cine for the rustic mind ;
Nor has he care to whom his wealth shall go,
Or who shall labour with his spade and hoe ;
But as he lends the strength that yet remains,
And some dead neighbour on his bier sustains,
(One with whom oft he whirl'd the bounding flail,
Toss'd the broad quoit or took th' inspiring ale) :
"For me" (he meditates) "shall soon be done,
This friendly duty, when my race be run ;
'Twas first in trouble as in error past,
Dark clouds and stormy cares whole years o'ercast,
But calm my setting day, and sunshine smiles at last
My vices punish'd and my follies spent,
Not loth to die, but yet to live content,
I rest :"—then casting on the grave his eye,
His friend compels a tear, and his own griefs a sigh.

Last on my list appears a match of love,
And one of virtue ;—happy may it prove !—
Sir Edward Archer is an amorous knight,
And maidens chaste and lovely shun his sight ;
His bailiff's daughter suited much his taste,
For Fanny Price was lovely and was chaste ;
To her the knight with gentle looks drew near,
And timid voice, assum'd to banish fear.
"Hope of my life, dear sovereign of my breast,
Which, since I knew thee, knows not joy nor rest ;
Know thou art all that my delighted eyes,
My fondest thoughts, my proudest wishes prize ;
And is that bosom—(what on earth so fair ?)—
To cradle some coarse peasant's sprawling heir ?
To be that pillow which some surly swain,
May treat with scorn and agonise with pain ?
Art thou, sweet maid, a ploughman's wants to share,
To dread his insult, to support his care ;
To hear his follies, his contempt to prove,
And (oh ! the torment !) to endure his love ;
Till want and deep regret, those charms destroy,
That time would spare, if time were pass'd in joy ?
With him in varied pains from morn till night.
Your hours shall pass ; yourself a ruffian's right ;
Your softest bed shall be the knotted wool ;
Your purest drink, the waters of the pool !
Your sweetest food will but your life sustain ;
And your best pleasure be a rest from pain ;
While through each year, as health and strength abate
You'll weep your woes and wonder at your fate ;
And cry, 'Behold, as life's last cares come on,
My burthen's growing when my strength is gone.'
"Now turn with me, and all the young desire,
That taste can form, that fancy can require ;
All that excites enjoyment or procures,
Wealth, health, respect, delight, and love, are yours
Sparkling, in cups of gold, your wines shall flow,
Grace that fair hand, in that dear bosom glow ;
Fruits of each clime and flowers through all the year
Shall on your walls and in your walks appear ;

* Spencer.

Where all beholding, shall your praise repeat,
No fruit so tempting and no flower so sweet;—
The softest carpets in your rooms shall lie,
Pictures of happiest loves shall meet your eye,
And tallest mirrors reaching to the floor,
Shall show you all the object I adore;
Who, by the hands of wealth and fashion drest,
By slaves attended and by friends carest,
Shall move, a wonder, through the public ways,
And hear the whispers of adoring praise.
Your female friends, though gayest of the gay,
Shall see you happy, and shall, sighing, say,
While smother'd envy rises in the breast—
'Oh! that we liv'd so beauteous and so blest!'
"Come then, my mistress and my wife; for she
Who trusts my honour is the wife for me;
Your slave, your husband, and your friend employ,
In search of pleasures we may both enjoy."
To this the damsel, meekly firm, replied:
"My mother lov'd, was married, toil'd and died;
With joys, she'd griefs, had troubles in her course,
But not one grief was pointed by remorse;
My mind is fix'd, to heaven I resign,
And be her love, her life, her comforts mine."
Tyrants have wept; and those with hearts of steel,
Who caus'd the anguish they disdain to heal,
Have at some time, the power of virtue known,
And found the joy they gave promote their own.
Our knight relenting, now befriends the youth,
Who took the maid, with innocence and truth;
And finds in that fair deed a sacred joy,
That will not perish and that cannot cloy;—
A living joy, that shall its vigour keep,
When beauty all decays, and all the passions sleep.

PART III.—Burials.

THERE was, 'tis said, and I believe, a time,
When humble Christians died with views sublime;
When all were ready for their faith to bleed,
But few to write or wrangle for their creed;
When lively faith upheld the sinking heart,
And friends, assur'd to meet, prepar'd to part;
When love felt hope, when sorrow grew serene,
And all was comfort in the death-bed scene.
Alas! when now the gloomy king they wait,
'Tis weakness yielding to resistless fate;
Like wretched men upon the ocean cast,
They labour hard and struggle to the last;
"Hope against hope," and wildly gaze around,
In search of help that never shall be found:
Nor, till the last strong billow stops the breath,
Will they believe them in the jaws of death!

When these my records I reflecting read,
And find what ills these numerous births succeed;
What powerful griefs these nuptial ties attend,
With what regret these painful journeys end;
When from the cradle to the grave I look,
Mine I conceive a melancholy book.
Where now is perfect resignation seen?
Alas! it is not on the village-green;——
I've seldom known, though I have often read
Of happy peasants on their dying-bed;
Whose looks proclaim'd that sunshine of the breast,
That more than hope, that heav'n itself express'd.
What I behold are feverish fits of strife,
'Twixt fears of dying and desire of life:
Those earthly hopes, that to the last endure;
Those fears, that hopes superior fail to cure;
At best a sad submission to the doom,
Which, turning from the danger, lets it come.

Sick lies the man, bewilder'd, lost, afraid,
His spirits vanquish'd and his strength decay'd;
No hope the friend, the nurse, the doctor lend—
"Call then a priest and fit him for his end."
A priest is call'd, 'tis now, alas! too late,
Death enters with him at the cottage-gate;
Or time allow'd—he goes, assur'd to find,
The self-commending, all-confiding mind;
And sighs to hear what we may justly call,
Death's Common-place, the train of thought in all.
"True, I'm a sinner," feebly he begins,
"But trust in mercy to forgive my sins:"
(Such cool confession no past crimes excite!
Such claim on mercy, as a sinner's right!)
"I know, mankind are frail, that God is just,
And pardons those who in his mercy trust;
We're sorely tempted in a world like this,
All men have done, and I, like all, amiss;
But now, if spar'd, it is my full intent,
On all the past to ponder and repent;
Wrongs against me I pardon great and small,
And if I die, I die in peace with all."
His merits thus and not his sins confest,
He speaks his hopes and leaves to heav'n the rest
Alas! are these the prospects, dull and cold,
That dying Christians to their priests unfold?
Or mends the prospect when th' enthusiast cries,
"I die assur'd!" and in a rapture dies?
Ah, where that humble, self-abasing mind,
With what confiding spirit shall we find;
The mind that feeling what repentance brings,
Dejection's terrors and contrition's stings,
Has then the hope that heav'n its grief approve
And the pure joy that flows from pardoning love?
Such have I seen in death, and much deplore,
So many dying—that I see no more:
Lo! now my records, where I grieve to trace,
How death has triumph'd in so short a space;
Who are the dead, how died they, I relate,
And snatch some portion of their acts from fate.

With Andrew Collett we the year begin,
The blind, fat landlord of the Old Crown-Inn:
Big as his butt and for the self-same use,
To take in stores of strong fermenting juice.
On his huge chair beside the fire he sate,
In revel chief, and umpire in debate;
Each night his string of vulgar tales he told;
When ale was cheap and bachelors were bold;
His heroes all were famous in their days,
Cheats were his boast and drunkards had his praise;
"One in three draughts, three mugs of ale took down,
As mugs were then—the champion of the crown;
For thrice three days another liv'd on ale,
And knew no change but that of mild and stale;
Two thirsty soakers watch'd a vessel's side,
When he the tap, with dexterous hand, applied;
Nor from their seats departed, till they found
That butt was out, and heard the mournful sound."
He prais'd a poacher, precious child of fun!
Who shot the keeper with his own spring-gun;
Nor less the smuggler who the exciseman tied,
And left him hanging at the birch-wood side,
There to expire;—but one who saw him hang,
Cut the good cord—a traitor of the gang.
His own exploits, with boastful glee, he told,
What ponds he empty'd and what pikes he sold;
And how, when blest with sight alert and gay,
The night's amusements kept him through the day.
He sang the praises of those times, when all
"For cards and dice, as for their drink, might call;
When justice wink'd on every jovial crew,
And ten-pins tumbled in the parson's view."
He told, when angry wives, provok'd to rail,
Or drive a third-day drunkard from his ale;
What were his triumphs and how great the skill,
That won the vex'd virago to his will;
Who raving came;—then talk'd in milder strain—
Then wept—then drank, and pledg'd her spouse again.
Such were his themes: how knaves o'er laws prevail,
Or when made captives, how they fly from jail;
The young how brave, how subtle were the old:
And oaths attested all that folly told.
On death like his what name shall we bestow,
So very sudden! yet so very slow?

'Twas slow :—disease augmenting year by year,
Show'd the grim king by gradual steps brought near :
'Twas not less sudden ;—in the night he died,
He drank, he swore, he jested and he lied ;
Thus aiding folly with departing breath :——
"Beware, Lorenzo, the slow sudden death."

Next died the widow Goe, an active dame,
Fam'd, ten miles round, and worthy all her fame ;
She lost her husband when their loves were young,
But kept her farm, her credit, and her tongue :
Full thirty years she rul'd with matchless skill,
With guiding judgment and resistless will ;
Advice she scorn'd, rebellions she suppress'd,
And sons and servants bow'd at her behest.
Like that great man's, who to his Saviour came,
Were the strong words of this commanding dame ;—
"Come," if she said, they came ; if "go," were gone ;
And if "do this," that instant it was done :
Her maidens told she was all eye and ear,
In darkness saw and could at distance hear ;—
No parish-business in the place could stir,
Without direction or assent from her ;
In turn she took each office as it fell ;
Knew all their duties and discharg'd them well ;
The lazy vagrants in her presence shook,
And pregnant damsels fear'd her stern rebuke ;
She look'd on want, with judgment clear and cool,
And felt with reason and bestow'd by rule ;
She match'd both sons and daughters to her mind,
And lent them eyes, for love, she heard, was blind ;
Yet ceaseless still she throve, alert, alive,
The working bee, in full or empty hive ;
Busy and careful, like that working bee,
No time for love nor tender cares had she ;
But when our farmers made their amorous vows,
She talk'd of market-steeds and patent-ploughs.
Not unemploy'd her evenings pass'd away,
Amusement clos'd, as business wak'd the day ;
When to her toilet's brief concern she ran,
And conversation with her friends, began ;
Who all were welcome at her board to share,
And joyous neighbours prais'd her Christmas fare ;
That none around might, in their scorn, complain
Of gossip Goe as greedy in her gain.
Thus long she reign'd, admir'd, if not approv'd ;
Prais'd, if not honour'd ; fear'd, if not belov'd ;—
When, as the busy days of spring drew near,
That call'd for all the forecast of the year ;
When lively hope the rising crops survey'd,
And April promis'd what September pay'd ;
When stray'd her lambs where gorse and greenweed grow ;
When rose her grass in richer vales below ;
When pleas'd she look'd on all the smiling land,
And view'd the hinds, who wrought at her command,
As Bridget churn'd the butter for her hand ;
(Geese, hens, and turkeys, following where she went ;)
Then, dread o'ercame her—that her days were spent.
"Bless me ! I die, and not a warning giv'n—
With *much* to do on earth, and not ALL for heav'n !
No reparation for my soul's affairs,
No leave petition'd for the barn's repairs ;
Accounts perplex'd, my interest yet unpaid,
My mind unsettled and my will unmade ;—
A lawyer haste, and in your way, a priest ;
And let me die in one good work at least."
She spake, and, trembling, dropp'd upon her knees,
Heaven in her eye, and in her hand her keys :
And still the more she found her life decay,
With greater force she grasp'd those signs of sway :
Then fell and died ! .... In haste her sons drew near,
And dropp'd, in haste, the tributary tear,
Then from th' adhering clasp the keys unbound,
And consolation for their sorrows, found.

Death has his infant-train ; his bony arm
Strikes from the baby-cheek the rosy charm ;
The brightest eye his glazing film makes dim,
And his cold touch sets fast the lithest limb :
He seiz'd the sick'ning boy to Gerard lent,*
When three days' life, in feeble cries, were spent ;
In pain brought forth, those painful hours to stay,
To breathe in pain and sigh its soul away !
"But why thus lent, if thus recall'd again,
To cause and feel, to live and die in, pain ?"
Or rather say, why grievous these appear,
If all it pays for heaven's eternal year ;
If these sad sobs and piteous sighs secure
Delights that live, when worlds no more endure ?
The sister-spirit long may lodge below,
And pains from nature, pains from reason, know ;
Through all the common ills of life may run,
By hope perverted and by love undone ;
A wife's distress, a mother's pangs, may dread,
And widow-tears, in bitter anguish, shed ;
May at old age arrive through numerous harms,
With children's children in those feeble arms ;
Nor till by years of want and grief opprest,
Shall the sad spirit flee and be at rest !
Yet happier therefore shall we deem the boy,
Secur'd from anxious care and dangerous joy ?
Not so ! for then would love divine, in vain
Send all the burdens, weary men sustain ;
All that now curb the passions when they rage,
The checks of youth and the regrets of age ;
All that now bid us hope, believe, endure,
Our sorrow's comfort and our vice's cure ;
All that for heaven's high joys the spirits train,
And charity, the crown of all, were vain.
Blest is the nursling never taught to sing,
But thrust untimely from its mother's wing ;
Or the grown warbler, who, with grateful voice,
Sings its own joy and makes the grove rejoice ;
Because, ere yet he charm'd th' attentive ear,
Hard were his trials and his pains severe !

Next died the lady who yon hall possess'd ;
And here they brought her noble bones to rest.
In town she dwelt ;—forsaken stood the hall,
Worms ate the floors, the tap'stry fled the wall :
No fire the kitchen's cheerless grate display'd ;
No cheerful light the long-clos'd sash convey'd !
The crawling worm that turns a summer-fly,
Here spun his shroud and laid him up to die
The winter-death :—upon the bed of state,
The bat shrill-shrieking woo'd his flickering mate ;
To empty rooms the curious came no more,
From empty cellars turn'd the angry poor,
And surly beggars curs'd the ever-bolted door.
To one small room the steward found his way,
Where tenants follow'd to complain and pay ;
Yet no complaint before the lady came,
The feeling servant spar'd the feeble dame ;
Who saw her farms with his observing eyes,
And answer'd all requests with his replies :—
She came not down, her falling groves to view ;
Why should she know, what one so faithful knew ?
Why come, from many clamorous tongues to hear,
What one so just might whisper in her ear !
Her oaks or acres, why with care explore ;
Why learn the wants, the sufferings of the poor ;
When one so knowing all their worth could trace,
And one so piteous govern'd in her place ?
Lo ! now, what dismal sons of darkness come,
To bear this daughter of indulgence home ;
Tragedians all, and well arrang'd in black !
Who nature, feeling, force, expression lack ;—
Who cause no tear, but gloomily pass by,
And shake their sables in the wearied eye,
That turns disgusted from the pompous scene,
Proud without grandeur, with profusion, mean !
The tear for kindness past affection owes ;
For worth deceas'd the sigh from reason flows ;
E'en well-feign'd passion for our sorrows call,
And real tears for mimic miseries fall :—
But this poor farce has neither truth nor art,
To please the fancy or to touch the heart ;

* See p. 10.

Unlike the darkness of the sky, that pours
On the dry ground its fertilising showers !
Unlike to that which strikes the soul with dread,
When thunders roar and forky fires are shed ;
Dark but not awful, dismal but yet mean,
With anxious bustle moves the cumbrous scene ;
Presents no objects, tender or profound,
But spreads its cold unmeaning gloom around.
When woes are feign'd, how ill such forms appear,
And oh ! how needless, when the woe's sincere.
Slow to the vault they come with heavy tread,
Bending beneath the lady and her lead ;
A case of elm surrounds that ponderous chest,
Close on that case the crimson velvet's press'd
Ungenerous this, that to the worm denies,
With niggard-caution, his appointed prize ;
For now, ere yet he works his tedious way,
Through cloth and wood and metal to his prey,
That prey dissolving shall a mass remain,
That fancy loaths and worms themselves disdain.
But see ! the master-mourner makes his way,
To end his office for the coffin'd clay ;
Pleas'd that our rustic men and maids behold
His plate like silver, and his studs like gold ;
As they approach to spell the age, the name,
And all the titles of th' illustrious dame.
This as (my duty done) some scholar read,
A village-father look'd disdain and said :
"Away, my friends ! why take such pains to know,
What some brave marble soon in church shall show ?
Where not alone her gracious name shall stand,
But how she liv'd the blessing of the land ;
How much we all deplor'd the noble dead,
What groans we utter'd and what tears we shed ;
Tears, true as those, which in the sleepy eyes
Of weeping cherubs on the stone shall rise ;
Tears, true as those, which, ere she found her grave,
The noble lady to our sorrows gave."

Down by the church-way-walk, and where the brook
Winds round the chancel like a shepherd's crook ;
In that small house, with those green pales before,
Where jasmine trails on either side the door ;
Where those dark shrubs that now grow wild at will,
Were clipt in form and tantalis'd with skill ;
Where cockles blanch'd and pebbles neatly spread,
Form'd shining borders for the larkspurs' bed ;—
There liv'd a lady, wise, austere, and nice,
Who show'd her virtue by her scorn of vice ;
In the dear fashions of her youth she dress'd,
A pea-green Joseph was her favourite vest ;
Erect she stood, she walk'd with stately mien,
Tight was her length of stays, and she was tall and lean.
There long she liv'd in maiden-state immur'd,
From looks of love and treacherous man secur'd ;
Though evil fame (but that was long before)
Had blown her dubious blast at Catherine's door :
A captain thither, rich from India came,
And though a cousin call'd, it touch'd her fame ;
Her annual stipend rose from his behest,
And all the long-prized treasures, she possess'd :—
If aught like joy awhile appear'd to stay
In that stern face, and chase those frowns away ;
'Twas when her treasures she dispos'd for view,
And heard the praises to their splendour due ;
Silks beyond price, so rich they'd stand alone,
And diamonds blazing on the buckled zone ;
Rows of rare pearls by curious workmen set,
And bracelets fair in box of glossy jet ;
Bright polish'd amber precious from its size,
Or forms, the fairest, fancy could devise :
Her drawers of cedar, shut with secret springs,
Conceal'd the watch of gold and rubied rings ;
Letters, long proofs of love, and verses fine,
Round the pink'd rims of crisped valentine.
Her china-closet, cause of daily care,
For woman's wonder held her pencill'd ware :
That pictur'd wealth of China and Japan,
Like its cold mistress, shunn'd the eye of man.

Her neat small room, adorn'd with maiden-taste,
A clipt French puppy first of favourites grac'd.
A parrot next, but dead and stuff'd with art ;
(For Poll, when living, lost the lady's heart,
And then his life ; for he was heard to speak
Such frightful words as ting'd his lady's cheek) ;
Unhappy bird ! who had no power to prove,
Save by such speech, his gratitude and love.
A grey old cat his whiskers lick'd beside ;
A type of sadness in the house of pride.
The polish'd surface of an India chest,
A glassy globe, in frame of ivory, prest ;
Where swam two finny creatures ; one of gold,
Of silver one ; both beauteous to behold :
All these were form'd the guiding taste to suit ;
The beasts well-manner'd and the fishes mute.
A widow'd aunt was there, compell'd by need,
The nymph to flatter and her tribe to feed ;
Who, veiling well her scorn, endur'd the clog,
Mute as the fish and fawning as the dog.
As years increas'd, these treasures, her delight,
Arose in value in their owner's sight :—
A miser knows that, view it as he will,
A guinea kept is but a guinea still ;
And so he puts it to its proper use,
That something more this guinea may produce :
But silks and rings in the possessor's eyes
The oft'ner seen, the more in value rise,
And thus are wisely hoarded to bestow,
On pride that governs, pleasure that will grow.
But what avail'd their worth—if worth had they—
In the sad summer of her slow decay ?
Then we beheld her turn an anxious look
From trunks and chests, and fix it on her book ;
A rich-bound Book of Prayer the captain gave,
(Some princess had it, or was said to have),
And then once more on all her stores, look round,
And draw a sigh so piteous and profound,
That told, "Alas ! how hard from these to part,
And for new hopes and habits form the heart !
What shall I do (she cried) my peace of mind,
To gain in dying, and to die resign'd ?"
"Hear," we return'd ;—"these baubles cast aside,
Nor give thy GOD a rival in thy pride ;
Thy closet's shut and ope thy kitchen's door :
There own thy failings, *here* invite the poor ;
A friend of Mammon let thy bounty make,
For widow's prayers, thy vanities forsake ;
And let the hungry, of thy pride, partake :
Then shall thy inward eye with joy survey,
The angel Mercy tempering Death's delay ?"
Alas ! 'twas hard ; the treasures still had charms,
Hope still its flattery, sickness its alarms ;
Still was the same unsettled, clouded view,
And the same plaintive cry, "What shall I do ?"
Nor change appear'd : for, when her race was run,
Doubtful we all exclaim'd, "What has been done ?"
Apart she liv'd, and still she lies alone ;
Yon earthly heap awaits the flattering stone,
On which invention shall be long employ'd
To show the various worth of Catherine Lloyd.

Next to these ladies, but in nought allied,
A noble peasant, Isaac Ashford, died.
Noble he was, contemning all things mean,
His truth unquestion'd and his soul serene :
Of no man's presence, Isaac felt afraid ;
At no man's question, Isaac look'd dismay'd :
Shame knew him not, he dreaded no disgrace ;
Truth, simple truth, was written in his face ;
Yet while the serious thought his soul approv'd,
Cheerful he seem'd and gentleness he lov'd ;
To bliss domestic he his heart resign'd,
And with the firmest, had the fondest mind :
Were others joyful, he look'd smiling on,
And gave allowance where he needed none ;
Good he refus'd with future ill to buy,
Nor knew a joy that caus'd reflection's sigh ;
A friend to virtue, his unclouded breast
No envy stung, no jealousy distress'd ;

(Bane of the poor! it wounds their weaker mind,
To miss one favour, which their neighbours find:)
Yet far was he from stoic-pride remov'd;
He felt humanely, and he warmly lov'd:
I mark'd his action, when his infant died,
And his old neighbour for offence was tried;
The still tears, stealing down that furrow'd cheek,
Spoke pity, plainer than the tongue can speak.
If pride were his, 'twas not their vulgar pride,
Who, in their base contempt, the great deride;
Nor pride in learning, though my clerk agreed,
If fate should call him, Ashford might succeed;
Nor pride in rustic skill, although we knew,
None his superior, and his equals, few:
But if that spirit in his soul had place,
It was the jealous pride that shuns disgrace;
A pride in honest fame, by virtue gain'd,
In sturdy boys to virtuous labours train'd;
Pride, in the power that guards his country's coast,
And all that Englishmen enjoy and boast;
Pride, in a life that slander's tongue defy'd,
In fact, a noble passion, misnam'd *pride*.
He had no party's rage, no sect'ry's whim;
Christian and countryman was *all* with him:
True to his church he came; no Sunday-shower
Kept him at home in that important hour;
Nor his firm feet could one persuading sect,
By the strong glare of their new light direct;
"On hope, in mine own sober light, I gaze,
But should be blind and lose it, in your blaze."
In times severe, when many a sturdy swain
Felt it his pride, his comfort, to complain,
Isaac their wants would soothe, his own would hide,
And feel in *that*, his comfort and his pride.
At length he found, when seventy years were run,
His strength departed and his labour done;
When, save his honest fame, he kept no more;
But lost his wife and saw his children poor;
'Twas then a spark of—say not discontent—
Struck on his mind, and thus he gave it vent:
"Kind are your laws ('tis not to be denied),
That in yon house, for ruin'd age, provide,
And they are just;—when young, we give you all,
And then for comforts in our weakness call.
Why then this proud reluctance to be fed,
To join your poor and eat the parish-bread?
But yet I linger, loath with him to feed,
Who gains his plenty by the sons of need;
He who, by contract, all your paupers took,
And guages stomachs with an anxious look:
On some old master I could well depend;
See him with joy and thank him as a friend;
But ill on him, who doles the day's supply,
And counts our chances, who at night may die:
Yet help me, heav'n! and let me not complain
Of what befalls me, but the fate sustain."
Such were his thoughts, and so resign'd he grew;
Daily he plac'd the workhouse in his view!
But came not there, for sudden was his fate,
He dropp'd expiring, at his cottage-gate.
I feel his absence in the hours of prayer,
And view his seat, and sigh for Isaac there;
I see no more those white locks thinly spread,
Round the bald polish of that honour'd head;
No more that awful glance on playful wight
Compell'd to kneel and tremble at the sight;
To fold his fingers all in dread the while,
Till Mister Ashford soften'd to a smile;
No more that meek and suppliant look in prayer,
Nor the pure faith (to give it force) are there:....
But he is blest, and I lament no more,
A wise good man contented to be poor.

Then died a rambler; not the one who sails,
And trucks, for female favours, beads and nails;
Not one, who posts from place to place—of men
And manners treating with a flying pen:
Not he, who climbs, for prospects, Snowden's height,
And chides the clouds that intercept the sight;
No curious shell, rare plant, or brilliant spar,
Entic'd our traveller, from his home, so far;
But all the reason, by himself assign'd
For so much rambling, was, a restless mind;
As on, from place to place, without intent,
Without reflection, Robin Dingley went.
Not thus by nature:—never man was found
Less prone to wander from his parish-bound;
Claudian's old man, to whom all scenes were new,
Save those where he and where his apples grew,
Resembled Robin, who around would look,
And his horizon, for the earth's, mistook.
To this poor swain a keen attorney came:—
"I give thee joy, good fellow! on thy name;
The rich old Dingley's dead;—no child has he,
Nor wife nor will; his ALL is left for thee:
To be his fortune's heir thy claim is good;
Thou hast the name, and we will prove the blood."
The claim was made; 'twas tried, it would not stand;
They prov'd the blood, but were refus'd the land.
Assur'd of wealth, this man of simple heart,
To every friend had predispos'd a part:
His wife had hopes indulg'd of various kind;
The three Miss Dingley's had their school assign'd,
Masters were sought for what each miss requir'd,
And books were bought and harpsichords were hir'd;
So high was hope:—the failure touch'd his brain,
And Robin never was himself again:
Yet he no wrath, no angry wish express'd,
But tried in vain to labour or to rest;
Then cast his bundle on his back, and went
He knew not whither, nor for what intent.
Years fled;—of Robin all remembrance past,
When home he wander'd in his rags at last:
A sailor's jacket on his limbs was thrown,
A sailor's story he had made his own;
Had suffer'd battles, prisons, tempests, storms,
Encountering death in all his ugliest forms;
His cheeks were haggard, hollow was his eye,
Where madness lurk'd, conceal'd in misery;
Want, and th' ungentle world, had taught a part,
And prompted cunning to that simple heart:
"He now bethought him, he would roam no more,
But live at home and labour as before."
Here cloth'd and fed, no sooner he began
To round and redden, than away he ran:
His wife was dead, their children past his aid;
So, unmolested, from his home he stray'd:
Six years elaps'd, when, worn with want and pain,
Came Robin, wrapt in all his rags, again:—
We chide, we pity;—plac'd among our poor,
He fed again, and was a man once more.
As when a gaunt and hungry fox is found,
Entrapp'd alive in some rich hunter's ground;
Fed for the field, although each day's a feast,
Fatten you may, but never tame the beast;
An house protects him, savoury viands sustain;
But loose his neck, and off he goes again:
So stole our vagrant from his warm retreat,
To rove a prowler and be deem'd a cheat.
Hard was his fare; for, him at length we saw,
In cart convey'd and laid supine on straw:
His feeble voice now spoke a sinking heart;
His groans now told the motions of the cart:
And thus he rose, but tried in vain to stand;
Clos'd was his eye and clench'd his clammy hand;
Life ebb'd apace, and our best aid, no more,
Could his weak sense or dying heart restore:—
But now he fell, a victim to the snare,
That vile attorneys for the weak prepare;—
They who, when profit or resentment call,
Heed not the groaning victim they enthrall.

Then died lamented, in the strength of life,
A valued mother and a faithful wife;
Call'd not away, when time had loos'd each hold
On the fond heart, and each desire grew cold;
But when, to all that knit us to our kind,
She felt fast-bound, as charity can bind;—

Not when the ills of age, its pain, its care,
The drooping spirit for its fate prepare ;
And, each affection failing, leaves the heart
Loos'd from life's charm and willing to depart ;—
But ALL her ties the strong invader broke,
In all their strength, by one tremendous stroke !
Sudden and swift the eager pest came on,
And all was terror, till all hope was gone ;
Was silent terror, where that hope grew weak,
Look'd on the sick, and was asham'd to speak.
Slowly they bore, with solemn step, the dead ;
When grief grew loud and bitter tears were shed :
My part began ; a crowd drew near the place,
Awe in each eye, alarm in every face :
So swift the ill ! and of so fierce a kind,
That fear with pity mingled in each mind ;
Friends with the husband came their griefs to blend ;
For good-man Frankford was to all a friend.
The last-born boy they held above the bier,
He knew not grief, but cries express'd his fear ;
Each different age and sex reveal'd its pain,
In now a louder, now a lower strain ;
While the meek father, listening to their tones,
Swell'd the full cadence of the grief by groans.
The elder sister strove her pangs to hide,
And soothing words to younger minds applied :—
" Be still, be patient," oft she strove to say ;
But fail'd as oft, and, weeping, turn'd away.
Curious and sad, upon the fresh-dug hill,
The village-lads stood melancholy still ;
And idle children, wandering to and fro,
As nature guided, took the tone of woe.
Arriv'd at home, how then they gaz'd around,
In ev'ry place, where she, no more, was found ;—
The seat at table, she was wont to fill ;
The fireside chair, still set, but vacant still ;
The garden-walks, a labour all her own ;
The lattic'd bower, with trailing shrubs o'ergrown ;
The Sunday-pew, she fill'd with all her race,
Each place of hers was now a sacred place ;
That, while it call'd up sorrows in the eyes,
Pierc'd the full heart, and forc'd them still to rise.
Oh sacred sorrow ! by whom souls are tried,
Sent not to punish mortals, but to guide ;
If thou art mine (and who shall proudly dare
To tell his Maker, he has had his share) ?
Still let me feel for what thy pangs are sent,
And be my guide, and not my punishment !

Of Leah Cousins next the name appears,
With honours crown'd and blest with length of years,
Save, that she liv'd to feel, in life's decay,
The pleasure die, the honours drop away :
A matron she, whom every village-wife,
View'd as the help and guardian of her life ;
Fathers and sons indebted to her aid,
Respect to her and her profession pay'd ;
Who in the house of plenty largely fed,
Yet took her station at the pauper's bed ;
Nor from that duty could be brib'd again,
While fear or danger urg'd her to remain ;
In her experience all her friends relied,
Heaven was her help and nature was her guide.
Thus Leah liv'd ; long trusted, much caress'd,
Till a town-dame a youthful farmer bless'd ;
A gay vain bride, who would example give,
To that poor village where she deign'd to live :
Some few months past, she sent in hour of need,
For Doctor Glib, who came with wondrous speed ;
Two days he waited, all his art applied,
To save the mother when her infant died ;—
" 'Twas well I came," at last he deign'd to say ;
" 'Twas wondrous well ;"—and proudly rode away.
The news ran round ;—" How vast the doctor's pow'r !
He sav'd the lady in the trying hour ;
Sav'd her from death, when she was dead to hope,
And her fond husband had resign'd her up :
So all, like her, may evil fate defy,
If Doctor Glib, with saving hand, be nigh."

Fame (now his friend), fear, novelty, and whim,
And fashion, sent the varying sex to him :
From this, contention in the village rose ;
And these, the dame espous'd ; the doctor those :
The wealthier part, to him and science went ;
With luck and Leah the poor remain'd content.
The matron sigh'd ; for she was vex'd at heart,
With so much profit, so much fame to part ;—
" So long successful in my art," she cried,
" And this proud man, so young and so untried !"
" Nay, but," he said, " and dare you trust your wives,
The joy, the pride, the solace of your lives,
To one who acts and knows no reason why,
But trusts, poor hag ! to luck for an ally ?—
Who, on experience, can her claims advance,
And own the powers of accident and chance ?
A whining dame, who prays in danger's view,
(A proof she knows not, what beside to do) ;
What's her experience ? In the time that's gone,
Blundering she wrought and still she blunders on :—
And what is nature ? One who acts in aid
Of gossips half asleep, and half afraid :
With such allies I scorn my fame to blend,
Skill is my luck and courage is my friend :
No slave to nature, 'tis my chief delight,
To win my way and act in her despite :—
Trust then my art, that, in itself complete,
Needs no assistance, and fears no defeat."
Warm'd by her well-spic'd ale and aiding pipe,
The angry matron grew for contest ripe.
" Can you," she said, " ungrateful and unjust,
Before experience, ostentation trust ?
What is your hazard, foolish daughters, tell ?
If safe, you're certain ; if secure, you're well :
That I have luck must friend and foe confess,
And what's good judgment but a lucky guess ?
He boasts but what he *can* do :—will you run
From me, your friend ! who all *he* boasts, *have* done ?
By proud and learned words his powers are known ;
By healthy boys and handsome girls my own :
Wives ! fathers ! children ! by my help you live ;
Has this pale doctor more than life to give ?
No stunted cripple hops the village round ;
Your hands are active and your heads are sound :
My lads are all your fields and flocks require ;
My lasses all those sturdy lads admire :
Can this proud leech, with all his boasted skill,
Amend the soul or body, wit or will ?
Does he for courts the sons of farmers frame,
Or make the daughter differ from the dame ?
Or, whom he brings into this world of woe,
Prepares he them their part to undergo ?
If not, this stranger from your doors repel,
And be content to *be* and to be *well*."
She spake : but, ah ! with words too strong and plain
Her warmth offended and her truth was vain.
The *many* left her, and the friendly *few*,
If never colder, yet they older grew ;
Till, unemploy'd, she felt her spirits droop,
And took, insidious aid ! th' inspiring cup ;
Grew poor and peevish as her powers decay'd,
And propp'd the tottering frame with stronger aid—
Then died !—I saw our careful swains convey,
From this our changeful world, the matron's clay,
Who to this world, at least, with equal care,
Brought them its changes, good and ill to share.

Now to his grave was Roger Cuff convey'd,
And strong resentment's lingering spirit laid.
Shipwreck'd in youth, he home return'd and found,
His brethren three—and thrice they wish'd him drown'd.
" Is this a landman's love ? Be certain then,
We part for ever !"—and they cried, " Amen !"
His words were truth's :—some forty summers fled,
His brethren died ; his kin suppos'd him dead :
Three nephews these, one sprightly niece, and one,
Less near in blood ; they call'd him *surly* John ;
He work'd in woods apart from all his kind,
Fierce were his looks and moody was his mind.

For home the sailor now began to sigh ;—
"The dogs are dead, and I'll return and die ;
When all I have, my gains, in years of care,
The younger Cuffs with kinder souls shall share ; . . .
"Yet hold ! I'm rich ;—with one consent they'll say,
'You're welcome, uncle, as the flowers in May.'
No ; I'll disguise me, be in tatters dress'd,
And best befriend the lads who treat me best."
Now all his kindred, neither rich nor poor,
Kept the wolf want some distance from the door.
In piteous plight he knock'd at George's gate.
And begg'd for aid, as he describ'd his state :—
But stern was George : "Let them who had thee strong,
Help thee to drag thy weaken'd frame along ;
To us a stranger, while your limbs would move ;
From us depart and try a stranger's love :——
Ha ! do'st thou murmur ?"—for, in Roger's throat,
Was "*rascal !*" rising with disdainful note.
To pious James he then his prayer address'd ;—
"Good-lack," quoth James, "thy sorrows pierce my breast ;
And had I wealth, as have my brethren twain,
One board should feed us and one roof contain :
But plead I will thy cause, and I will pray :
And so farewell ! heaven help thee on thy way !"
"Scoundrel !" said Roger (but apart) ;—and told
His case to Peter ;—Peter too was cold :—
"The rates are high ; we have a-many poor ;
But I will think,——" he said, and shut the door.
Then the gay niece, the seeming pauper press'd ;—
"Turn, Nancy, turn, and view this form distrest ;
Akin to thine is this declining frame,
And this poor beggar claims an uncle's name."
"Avaunt ! begone ! (the courteous maiden said),
Thou vile impostor ! uncle Roger's dead ;
I hate thee, beast ! thy look, my spirit shocks ;
Oh ! that I saw thee starving in the stocks !"
"My gentle niece !" he said ;—and sought the wood.—
"I hunger, fellow ; prithee, give me food !"
"Give ! am I rich ? this hatchet take and try
Thy proper strength, nor give those limbs the lie ;
Work, feed thyself, to thine own powers appeal,
Nor whine out woes, thine own right hand can heal :
And while that hand is thine, and thine a leg,
Scorn, of the proud or of the base to beg."
"Come, surly John, thy wealthy kinsman view ;"
(Old Roger said :)—"thy words are brave and true ;
Come, live with me : we'll vex those scoundrel-boys :
And that prim shrew shall, envying, hear our joys.
Tobacco's glorious fume all day we'll share,
With beef and brandy kill all kinds of care,
We'll beer and biscuit on our table heap,
And rail at rascals till we fall asleep."
Such was their life : but when the woodman died,
His grieving kin for Roger's smiles applied ;—
In vain ; he shut, with stern rebuke, the door,
And dying, built a refuge for the poor ;
With this restriction, that no Cuff should share
One meal or shelter for one moment there.

My record ends :—but hark ! ev'n now I hear
The bell of death, and know not whose to fear :
Our farmers all and all our hinds were well ;
In no man's cottage, danger seem'd to dwell :—
Yet death of man proclaim these heavy chimes,
For thrice they sound, with pausing space, three times.
"Go ; of my sexton seek, whose days are sped ?—
What ! he, himself ! . . . and is old Dibble dead ?"
His eightieth year he reach'd, still undecay'd,
And rectors five to one close vault convey'd : . . .
But he is gone ; his care and skill I lose,
And gain a mournful subject for my muse :
His masters lost, he'd oft in turn deplore,
And kindly add, "Heaven grant, I lose no more !"
Yet while he spake, a sly and pleasant glance
Appear'd at variance with his complaisance :
For, as he told their fate and varying worth,
He archly look'd, "I yet may bear thee forth."
"When first"—(he so began)—"my trade I ply'd,
Good Master Addle was the parish-guide ;
His clerk and sexton, I beheld with fear
His stride majestic and his frown severe ;
A noble pillar of the church he stood,
Adorn'd with college-gown and parish-hood ;
Then, as he pac'd the hallow'd aisles about,
He fill'd the sevenfold surplice fairly out :
But in his pulpit wearied down with prayer,
He sat and seem'd as in his study's chair ;
For while the anthem swell'd, and when it ceas'd,
Th' expecting people view'd their slumbering priest ;—
Who dozing, died.——Our parson Peele was next ;
'I will not spare you,' was his favourite text :
Nor did he spare, but rais'd them many a pound ;
Ev'n me he mulct for my poor rood of ground ;
Yet car'd he nought, but with a gibing speech,
'What should I do,' quoth he, 'but what I preach ?'
His piercing jokes (and he'd a plenteous store)
Were daily offer'd both to rich and poor ;
His scorn, his love, in playful words he spoke ;
His pity, praise, and promise, were a joke :
But though so young and blest with spirits high,
He died as grave as any judge could die :
The strong attack subdu'd his lively powers—
His was the grave and Doctor Grandspear ours.
"Then were there golden times the village round ;
In his abundance all appear'd t' abound ;
Liberal and rich, a plenteous board he spread,
Ev'n cool dissenters at his table fed ;
Who wish'd, and hop'd—and thought a man so kind,
A way to heav'n, though not their own, might find ;
To them, to all, he was polite and free,
Kind to the poor, and, ah ! most kind to me :—
'Ralph,' would he say, 'Ralph Dibble, thou art old ;
That doublet fit, 'twill keep thee from the cold :
How does my sexton ? What ! the times are hard ;
Drive that stout pig and pen him in thy yard.'
But most, his reverence lov'd a mirthful jest ;—
'Thy coat is thin ; why, man, thou'rt *barely* drest ;
It's worn to th' thread ! but I have nappy beer ;
Clap that within, and see how they will wear.'
"Gay days were these ; but they were quickly past :
When first he came, we found he cou'dn't last :
An whoreson cough (and at the fall of leaf)
Upset him quite :—but what's the gain of grief ?
"Then came the author-rector ; his delight
Was all in books ; to read them, or to write ;
Women and men he strove alike to shun,
And hurried homeward when his tasks were done :
Courteous enough, but careless what he said,
For points of learning he reserv'd his head ;
And when addressing either poor or rich,
He knew no better than his cassock, which :
He, like an osier, was of pliant kind,
Erect by nature, but to bend inclin'd ;
Not like a creeper falling to the ground,
Or meanly catching on the neighbours round :—
Careless was he of surplice, hood, and band—
And kindly took them as they came to hand ;
Nor, like the doctor, wore a world of hat,
As if he sought for dignity in that :
He talk'd, he gave, but not with cautious rules :
Nor turn'd from gypsies, vagabonds, or fools ;
It was his nature, but they thought it whim,
And so our beaux and beauties turn'd from him :
Of questions, much he wrote, profound and dark—
How spake the serpent, and where stopp'd the ark ;
From what far land the queen of Sheba came ;
Who Salem's priest and what his father's name ;
He made the Song of Songs its mysteries yield,
And Revelations to the Word, reveal'd.
He sleeps i' the aisle—but not a stone records
His name or fame, his actions or his words :——
And truth, your reverence, when I look around,
And mark the tombs in our sepulchral ground,
(Though dare I not of one man's hope to doubt),
I'd join the party who repose without.
"Next came a youth from Cambridge, and, in truth,
He was a sober and a comely youth ;
He blush'd in meekness as a modest man,
And gain'd attention ere his task began ;

When preaching, seldom ventur'd on reproof,
But touch'd his neighbours tenderly enough.
"Him, in his youth, a clamorous sect assail'd,
Advis'd and censur'd, flatter'd—and prevail'd.
Then did he much his sober hearers vex,
Confound the simple and the sad perplex;
To a new style his reverence rashly took:
Loud grew his voice, to threat'ning swell'd his look;
Above, below, on either side, he gaz'd,
Amazing all, and most himself amaz'd:
No more he read his preachments pure and plain,
But launch'd outright, and rose and sank again:
At times he smil'd in scorn, at times he wept,
And such sad coil with words of vengeance kept,
That our best sleepers started as they slept.
"'Conviction comes like lightning,' he would cry;
'In vain you seek it and in vain you fly;
'Tis like the rushing of the mighty wind,
Unseen its progress, but its power you find;
It strikes the child ere yet its reason wakes;
His reason fled, the ancient sire it shakes;
The proud, learn'd man, and him who loves to know
How and from whence these gusts of grace will blow,
It shuns—but sinners in their way impedes,
And sots and harlots visits in their deeds;
Of faith and penance it supplies the place;
Assures the vilest that they live by grace,
And, without running, makes them win the race.'
"Such was the doctrine our young prophet taught;
And here conviction, there confusion wrought:
When his thin cheek assum'd a deadly hue,
And all the rose to one small spot withdrew:
They call'd it hectic; 'twas a fiery flush,
More fix'd and deeper than the maiden blush;
His paler lips the pearly teeth disclos'd,
And lab'ring lungs the length'ning speech oppos'd.
No more his span-girth shanks and quiv'ring thighs,
Upheld a body of the smaller size;
But down he sank upon his dying-bed,
And gloomy crotchets fill'd his wandering head.
"'Spite of my faith, all-saving faith,' he cried,
'I fear of worldly works, the wicked pride;
Poor as I am, degraded, abject, blind,
The good I've wrought still rankles in my mind;
My alms-deeds all and every deed I've done,
My moral-rags defile me every one;
It should not be:—what say'st thou? tell me, Ralph.'
Quoth I, 'Your reverence, I believe, you're safe;
Your faith's your prop, nor have you pass'd such time,
In life's good-works as swell them to a crime.
If I of pardon for my sins were sure,
About my goodness I would rest secure.'
"Such was his end; and mine approaches fast;
I've seen my best of preachers—and my last."
He bow'd, and archly smil'd at what he said,
Civil but sly:—"And is old Dibble dead?"
Yes! he is gone: and we are going all;
Like flowers we wither and like leaves we fall:—
Here, with an infant, joyful sponsors come,
Then bear the new-made Christian to its home:
A few short years and we behold him stand,
To ask a blessing, with his bride in hand:
A few, still seeming shorter, and we hear
His widow weeping at her husband's bier:—
Thus, as the months succeed, shall infants take
Their names, while parents them and us forsake;
Thus brides again and bridegrooms blithe shall kneel,
By love or law compell'd their vows to seal,
Ere I again, or one like me, explore
These simple annals of the village poor.

THE LIBRARY.

When the sad soul, by care and grief opprest,
Looks round the world, but looks in vain, for rest;
When every object that appears in view,
Partakes her gloom and seems dejected too;
Where shall affliction from itself retire?
Where fade away and placidly expire?
Alas! we fly to silent scenes in vain,
Care blasts the honours of the flow'ry plain:
Care veils in clouds the sun's meridian beam,
Sighs through the grove and murmurs in the stream;
For when the soul is labouring in despair,
In vain the body breathes a purer air:
No storm-toss'd sailor sighs for slumbering seas,
He dreads the tempest, but invokes the breeze;
On the smooth mirror of the deep resides
Reflected woe, and o'er unruffled tides
The ghost of every former danger glides.
Thus in the calms of life, we only see
A steadier image of our misery;
But lively gales and gently-clouded skies,
Disperse the sad reflections as they rise;
And busy thoughts and little cares avail
To ease the mind, when rest and reason fail.
When the dull thought, by no designs employ'd,
Dwells on the past, or suffer'd or enjoy'd,
We bleed anew in every former grief,
And joys departed furnish no relief.
Not hope herself, with all her flattering art,
Can cure this stubborn sickness of the heart;
The soul disdains each comfort she prepares,
And anxious searches for congenial cares;
Those lenient cares, which, with our own combin'd,
By mixt sensations ease th' afflicted mind,
And steal our grief away and leave their own behind;
A lighter grief! which feeling hearts endure
Without regret, nor ev'n demand a cure.

But what strange art, what magic can dispose
The troubled mind to change its native woes?
Or lead us willing from ourselves, to see
Others more wretched, more undone than we?
This, books can do;—nor this alone; they give
New views to life, and teach us how to live;
They soothe the griev'd, the stubborn they chastise,
Fools they admonish and confirm the wise:
Their aid they yield to all; they never shun
The man of sorrow, nor the wretch undone:
Unlike the hard, the selfish, and the proud,
They fly not sullen from the suppliant crowd;
Nor tell to various people various things,
But show to subjects, what they show to kings.
Come, child of care! to make thy soul serene,
Approach the treasures of this tranquil scene!
Survey the dome, and as the doors unfold,
The soul's best cure in all her cares, behold!
Where mental wealth the poor in thought may find,
And mental physic the diseas'd in mind;
See here the balms that passion's wounds assuage,
See coolers here, that damp the fire of rage;
Here alt'ratives, by slow degrees control
The chronic habits of the sickly soul;
And round the heart and o'er the aching head,
Mild opiates here, their sober influence shed.
Now bid thy soul, man's busy scenes exclude,
And view compos'd this silent multitude:—
Silent they are, but, though depriv'd of sound,
Here all the living languages abound;
Here all that live no more; preserv'd they lie,
In tombs that open to the curious eye.
Blest be the gracious Power, who taught mankind,
To stamp a lasting image of the mind!—
Beasts may convey, and tuneful birds may sing,
Their mutual feelings, in the opening spring;

But man alone has skill and power to send,
The heart's warm dictates to the distant friend :
'Tis his alone to please, instruct, advise,
Ages remote and nations yet to rise.
In sweet repose, when labour's children sleep,
When joy forgets to smile and care to weep,
When passion slumbers in the lover's breast,
And fear and guilt partake the balm of rest,
Why then denies the studious man to share
Man's common good, who feels his common care ?
Because the hope is his, that bids him fly
Night's soft repose and sleep's mild power defy ;
That after-ages may repeat his praise,
And fame's fair meed be his, for length of days.
Delightful prospect ! when we leave behind,
A worthy offspring of the fruitful mind !
Which, born and nurst through many an anxious day,
Shall all our labour, all our cares repay.
Yet all are not these births of noble kind,
Not all the children of a vigorous mind ;
But where the wisest should alone preside,
The weak would rule us and the blind would guide ;
Nay, man's best efforts taste of man, and show,
The poor and troubled source from which they flow ;
Where most he triumphs, we his wants perceive,
And for his weakness in his wisdom grieve.
But though imperfect all ; yet wisdom loves
This seat serene, and virtue's self approves :—
Here come the griev'd, a change of thought to find :
The curious here, to feed a craving mind ;
Here the devout, their peaceful temple choose ;
And here, the poet meets his favouring muse.
With awe, around these silent walks I tread ;
These are the lasting mansions of the dead :—
" The dead !" methinks a thousand tongues reply ;
These are the tombs of such as cannot die !
Crown'd with eternal fame, they sit sublime,
And laugh at all the little strife of time."
Hail, then, immortals ! ye who shine above,
Each in his sphere, the literary Jove ;
And ye the common people of these skies,
An humbler crowd of nameless deities ;
Whether it is yours to lead the willing mind
Through history's mazes, and the turnings find ;
Or whether, led by science, ye retire,
Lost and bewildered in the vast desire ;
Whether the muse invites you to her bowers,
And crowns your placid brows with living flowers ;
Or godlike wisdom teaches you to show
The noblest road to happiness below ;
Or men and manners prompt the easy page
To mark the flying follies of the age :
Whatever good ye boast, that good impart ;
Inform the head and rectify the heart.

Lo ! all in silence, all in order stand,
And mighty folios first, a lordly band ;
Then quartos their well-order'd ranks maintain,
And light octavos fill a spacious plain ;
See yonder, rang'd in more frequented rows,
An humbler band of duodecimos ;
While undistinguish'd trifles swell the scene,
The last new play and fritter'd magazine :
Thus 'tis in life, where first the proud, the great,
In leagu'd assembly keep their cumbrous state ;
Heavy and huge, they fill the world with dread,
Are much admir'd and are but little read :
The commons next, a middle rank are found ;
Professions fruitful pour their offspring round ;
Reasoners and wits are next their place allow'd,
And last, of vulgar tribes, a countless crowd.
First let us view the form, the size, the dress ;
For, these the manners, nay the mind express ;
That weight of wood, with leathern coat o'erlaid,
Those ample clasps, of solid metal made ;
The close-prest leaves, unclos'd for many an age,
The dull red edging of the well-fill'd page ;
On the broad back the stubborn ridges roll'd,
Where yet the title stands in tarnish'd gold :
These all a sage and labour'd work proclaim,
A painful candidate for lasting fame :
No idle wit, no trifling verse can lurk,
In the deep bosom of that weighty work ;
No playful thoughts degrade the solemn style,
Nor one light sentence claims a transient smile.
Hence, in these times, untouch'd the pages lie,
And slumber out their immortality ;
They *had* their day, when, after all his toil,
His morning study, and his midnight oil,
At length an author's ONE great work appear'd,
By patient hope and length of days, endear'd ;
Expecting nations hail'd it from the press,
Poëtic friends prefix'd each kind address ;
Princes and kings receiv'd the pond'rous gift,
And ladies read the work, they could not lift.
Fashion, though folly's child, and guide of fools,
Rules e'en the wisest, and in learning rules ;
From crowds and courts to wisdom's seat she goes,
And reigns triumphant o'er her mother's foes.
For lo ! these fav'rites of the ancient mode
Lie all neglected like the *Birth-Day Ode ;*
Ah ! needless now this weight of massy chain ;*
Safe in themselves, the once-loved works remain ;
No readers now invade their still retreat,
None try to steal them from their parent-seat ;
Like ancient beauties, they may now discard
Chains, bolts, and locks, and lie without a guard.
Our patient fathers, trifling themes laid by,
And roll'd, o'er labour'd works, th' attentive eye ;
Page after page, the much-enduring men
Explor'd, the deeps and shallows of the pen ;
Till, every former note and comment known,
They mark'd the spacious margin with their own :
Minute corrections prov'd their studious care ;
The little index pointing, told us where ;
And many an emendation show'd, the age
Look'd far beyond the rubric title-page.
Our nicer palates lighter labours seek,
Cloy'd with a folio-Number once a-week ;
Bibles with cuts and comments, thus go down ;
Ev'n light Voltaire is Number'd through the town :
Thus physic flies abroad, and thus the law,
From men of study and from men of straw ;
Abstracts, abridgements, please the fickle times,
Pamphlets and plays and politics and rhymes :
But though, to write be now a task of ease,
The task is hard by manly arts to please ;
When all our weakness is expos'd to view,
And half our judges are our rivals too.

Amid these works, on which the eager eye
Delights to fix, or glides reluctant by ;
When all combin'd, their decent pomp display,
Where shall we first our early off'ring pay ?

To thee, DIVINITY ! to thee, the light
And guide of mortals, through their mental night ;
By whom we learn, our hopes and fears to guide,
To bear with pain and to contend with pride ;
When griev'd, to pray ; when injur'd, to forgive ;
And with the world in charity to live.
Not truths like these, inspir'd that numerous race,
Whose pious labours fill this ample space ;
But questions nice, where doubt on doubt arose,
Awak'd to war the long-contending foes.
For dubious meanings, learn'd Polemics strove,
And wars on faith prevented works of love ;
The brands of discord far around were hurl'd,
And holy wrath inflam'd a sinful world.
Dull though impatient, peevish though devout,
With wit disgusting and despis'd without ;
Saints in design, in execution, men,
Peace in their looks and vengeance in their pen.

Methinks I see, and sicken at the sight,
Spirits of spleen from yonder pile alight ;

* In the more ancient libraries, works of value and importance were fastened to their places by a length of chain, and might so be perused, but not taken away.

Spirits who prompted every damning page,
With pontiff pride and still-increasing rage :
Lo ! how they stretch their gloomy wings around,
And lash with furious strokes the trembling ground !
They prey, they fight, they murder, and they weep,
Wolves in their vengeance, in their manners sheep,
Too well they act the prophet's fatal part,
Denouncing evil with a zealous heart ;
And each, like Jonas, is displeas'd if God
Repent his anger, or withhold his rod.
But here, the dormant fury rests unsought,
And zeal sleeps soundly by the foes she fought ;
Here all the rage of controversy ends,
And rival zealots rest like bosom-friends ;
An Athanasian here in deep repose,
Sleeps with the fiercest of his Arian foes ;
Socinians here with Calvinists abide,
And thin partitions angry chiefs divide ;
Here wily Jesuits simple Quakers meet,
And Bellarmine has rest at Luther's feet.
Great authors for the church's glory fir'd,
Are for the church's peace, to rest retir'd ;
And close beside, a mystic, maudlin race,
Lie, "crumbs of comfort, for the babes of grace."
Against her foes, religion well defends
Her sacred truths, but often fears her friends ;
If learn'd, their pride, if weak, their zeal she dreads,
And their hearts' weakness, who have soundest heads ;
But most she fears the controversial pen,
The holy strife of disputatious men ;
Who the blest Gospel's peaceful page explore,
Only to fight against its precepts more.
Near to these seats, behold yon slender frames,
All closely fill'd and mark'd with modern names ;
Where no fair science ever shows her face,
Few sparks of genius and no spark of grace ;
There sceptics rest, a still-increasing throng,
And stretch their widening wings ten-thousand strong ;
Some in close fight their dubious claims maintain ;
Some skirmish lightly, fly and fight again ;
Coldly profane and impiously gay,
Their end the same, though various in their way.
When first Religion came to bless the land,
Her friends were then a firm believing band ;
To doubt was, then, to plunge in guilt extreme,
And all was gospel that a monk could dream ;
Insulted reason fled the grov'ling soul,
For fear to guide and visions to control :
But now, when reason has assum'd her throne,
She, in her turn, demands to reign alone ;
Rejecting all that lies beyond her view,
And, being judge, will be a witness too ;
Insulted faith then leaves the doubtful mind,
To seek for truth, without a power to find :
Ah ! when will both in friendly beams unite,
And pour on erring man resistless light ?

Next to the seats, well stor'd with works divine,
An ample space, Philosophy ! is thine ;
Our reason's guide, by whose assisting light,
We trace the moral bounds of wrong and right ;
Our guide through nature, from the sterile clay,
To the bright orbs of yon celestial way !
'Tis thine, the great, the golden chain to trace,
Which runs through all, connecting race with race ;
Save where those puzzling, stubborn links remain,
Which thy inferior light pursues in vain :—
How vice and virtue in the soul contend ;
How widely differ, yet how nearly blend !
What various passions war on either part,
And now confirm, now melt the yielding heart ;
How fancy loves around the world to stray,
While judgment slowly picks his sober way ;
The stores of memory and the flights sublime
Of genius, bound by neither space nor time ;—
All these, divine Philosophy explores,
Till, lost in awe, she wonders and adores.
From these descending to the earth she turns,
And matter, in its various form, discerns ;
She parts the beamy light with skill profound,
Metes the thin air and weighs the flying sound ;
'Tis hers, the lightning from the clouds to call,
And teach the fiery mischief where to fall.
Yet more her volumes teach—on these we look
As abstracts drawn from nature's larger book :
Here first describ'd, the torpid earth appears,
And next, the vegetable-robe it wears ;
Where flow'ry tribes, in valleys, fields, and groves,
Nurse the still flame, and feed the silent loves ;
Loves, where no grief, nor joy, nor bliss, nor pain,
Warm the glad heart or vex the labouring brain ;
But as the green blood moves along the blade,
The bed of Flora on the branch is made ;
Where without passion, love instinctive lives,
And gives new life, unconscious that it gives.
Advancing still in nature's maze, we trace,
In dens and burning plains, her savage-race ;
With those tame-tribes who on their lord attend,
And find, in man, a master and a friend :
Man crowns the scene, a world of wonders new,
A moral world, that well demands our view.
This world is here ; for, of more lofty kind,
These neighbouring volumes reason on the mind ;
They paint the state of man ere yet endu'd
With knowledge ;—man, poor, ignorant, and rude ;
Then, as his state improves, their pages swell,
And all its cares and all its comforts, tell :
Here we behold how inexperience buys,
At little price, the wisdom of the wise ;
Without the troubles of an active state,
Without the cares and dangers of the great,
Without the miseries of the poor, we know
What wisdom, wealth, and poverty bestow ;
We see how reason calms the raging mind,
And how contending passions urge mankind :
Some, won by virtue, glow with sacred fire ;
Some, lur'd by vice, indulge the low desire ;
Whilst others, won by either, now pursue
The guilty chase, now keep the good in view ;
For ever wretched, with themselves at strife,
They lead a puzzled, vext, uncertain life ;
For, transient vice bequeaths a lingering pain,
Which transient virtue seeks to cure in vain.

Whilst thus engag'd, high views enlarge the soul,
New interests draw, new principles control ;
Nor thus the soul alone resigns her grief,
But here the tortur'd body finds relief ;
For see where yonder sage Arachnè shapes
Her subtile gin, that not a fly escapes !
There Physic fills the space, and far around,
Pile above pile, her learned works abound ;
Glorious their aim—to ease the labouring heart,
To war with death and stop his flying dart ;
To trace the source whence the fierce contest grew,
And life's short lease on easier terms renew ;
To calm the frenzy of the burning brain,
To heal the tortures of imploring pain,
Or, when more powerful ills all efforts brave,
To ease the victim no device can save,
And smooth the stormy passage to the grave.
But man, who knows no good unmix'd and pure,
Oft finds a poison where he sought a cure :
For, grave deceivers lodge their labours here,
And cloud the science they pretend to clear :
Scourges for sin, the solemn tribe are sent ;
Like fire and storms, they call us to repent :
But storms subside, and fires forget to rage ;
These are eternal scourges of the age :
'Tis not enough that each terrific hand
Spreads desolation round a guilty land ;
But, train'd to ill, and harden'd by its crimes,
Their pen relentless kills through future times.
Say ye, who search these records of the dead,
Who read huge works, to boast what ye have read ;
Can all the real knowledge ye possess,
Or those (if such there are), who more than guess,
Atone for each impostor's wild mistakes,
And mend the blunders pride or folly makes ?

What thought so wild, what airy dream so light,
That will not prompt a theorist to write?
What art so prevalent, what proof so strong,
That will convince him his attempt is wrong?
One in the solids finds each lurking ill,
Nor grants the passive fluids power to kill;
A learned friend some subtler reason brings,
Absolves the channels, but condemns their springs;
The subtle nerves, that shun the doctor's eye,
Escape no more his subtler theory;
The vital heat, that warms the labouring heart,
Lends a fair system to these sons of art;
The vital air, a pure and subtle stream,
Serves a foundation for an airy scheme,
Assists the doctor, and supports his dream.
Some have their favourite ills, and each disease
Is but a younger branch that kills from these:
One to the gout contracts all human pain,
He views it raging in the frantic brain;
Finds it in fevers all his efforts mar,
And sees it lurking in the cold catarrh:
Bilious by some, by others nervous seen,
Rage the fantastic dæmons of the spleen;
And every symptom of the strange disease
With every system of the sage agrees.
Ye frigid tribe, on whom I wasted long
The tedious hours and ne'er indulg'd in song;
Ye first seducers of my easy heart,
Who promis'd knowledge, ye could not impart;
Ye dull deluders, truth's destructive foes;
Ye sons of fiction, clad in stupid prose;
Ye treacherous leaders, who, yourselves in doubt,
Light up false fires and send us far about;—
Still may yon spider round your pages spin,
Subtle and slow, her emblematic gin!
Buried in dust and lost in silence, dwell,
Most potent, grave, and reverend friends—farewell!

Near these, and where the setting sun displays,
Through the dim window, his departing rays,
And gilds yon columns, there on either side,
The huge abridgements of the Law abide;
Fruitful as vice the dread correctors stand,
And spread their guardian terrors round the land;
Yet, as the best that human care can do,
Is mixt with error, oft with evil too;
Skill'd in deceit, and practis'd to evade,
Knaves stand secure, for whom these laws were made:
And justice vainly each expedient tries,
While art eludes it, or while power defies.
"Ah! happy age," the youthful poet sings,
"When the free nations knew not laws nor kings;
When all were blest to share a common store,
And none were proud of wealth, for none were poor;
No wars, nor tumults vex'd each still domain,
No thirst of empire, no desire of gain;
No proud great man, nor one who would be great,
Drove modest merit from its proper state;
Nor into distant climes would avarice roam,
To fetch delights for luxury at home.
Bound by no ties which kept the soul in awe,
They dwelt at liberty, and love was law!"
"Mistaken youth! each nation first was rude,
Each man a cheerless son of solitude,
To whom no joys of social life were known,
None felt a care that was not all his own;
Or in some languid clime his abject soul
Bow'd to a little tyrant's stern control;
A slave, with slaves his monarch's throne he rais'd,
And in rude song his ruder idol prais'd;
The meaner cares of life were all he knew,
Bounded his pleasures, and his wishes few:
But when by slow degrees the arts arose,
And science waken'd from her long repose;
When commerce, rising from the bed of ease,
Ran round the land and pointed to the seas;
When emulation, born with jealous eye,
And avarice, lent their spurs to industry;
Then one by one the numerous laws were made,
Those to control, and these to succour trade;
To curb the insolence of rude command,
To snatch the victim from the usurer's hand;
To awe the bold, to yield the wrong'd redress,
And feed the poor with luxury's excess."
Like some vast flood, unbounded, fierce, and strong,
His nature leads ungovern'd man along;
Like mighty bulwarks made to stem that tide,
The laws are form'd and plac'd on ev'ry side;
Whene'er it breaks the bounds by these decreed,
New statutes rise, and stronger laws succeed;
More and more gentle grows the dying stream,
More and more strong the rising bulwarks seem;
Till, like a miner working sure and slow,
Luxury creeps on, and ruins all below;
The basis sinks, the ample piles decay,
The stately fabric shakes and falls away;
Primeval want and ignorance come on,
But freedom, that exalts the savage state, is gone.

Next, History ranks;—there full in front she lies,
And every nation her dread tale supplies;
Yet history has her doubts, and every age
With sceptic queries marks the passing page;
Records of old nor later date are clear,
Too distant those and these are plac'd too near;
There time conceals the objects from our view,
Here our own passions and a writer's too:
Yet in these volumes see how states arose!
Guarded by virtue from surrounding foes;
Their virtue lost, and of their triumphs vain,
Lo! how they sunk to slavery again!
Satiate with power, of fame and wealth possess'd,
A nation grows too glorious to be blest;
Conspicuous made, she stands the mark of all,
And foes join foes to triumph in her fall.
Thus speaks the page that paints ambition's race,
The monarch's pride, his glory, his disgrace;
The headlong course, that madd'ning heroes run,
How soon triumphant, and how soon undone;
How slaves, turn'd tyrants, offer crowns to sale,
And each fall'n nation's melancholy tale.

Lo! where of late the Book of Martyrs stood,
Old pious tracts, and bibles bound in wood;
There, such the taste of our degenerate age,
Stand the profane delusions of the stage:
Yet virtue owns the Tragic Muse a friend,
Fable her means, morality her end;
For this she rules all passions in their turns,
And now the bosom bleeds, and now it burns;
Pity with weeping eye surveys her bowl,
Her anger swells, her terror chills the soul;
She makes the vile to virtue yield applause,
And own her sceptre while they break her laws;
For vice in others is abhorr'd of all,
And villains triumph when the worthless fall.
Not thus her sister Comedy prevails,
Who shoots at Folly, for her arrow fails;
Folly, by dulness arm'd, eludes the wound,
And harmless sees the feather'd shafts rebound;
Unhurt she stands, applauds the archer's skill,
Laughs at her malice, and is Folly still.
Yet well the muse pourtrays in fancied scenes,
What pride will stoop to, what profession means;
How formal fools the farce of state applaud,
How caution watches at the lips of fraud;
The wordy variance of domestic life,
The tyrant husband, the retorting wife;
The snares for innocence, the lie of trade,
And the smooth tongue's habitual masquerade.
With her the virtues too obtain a place,
Each gentle passion, each becoming grace;
The social joy in life's securer road,
Its easy pleasure, its substantial good;
The happy thought that conscious virtue gives,
And all that ought to live, and all that lives.

But who are these? Methinks a noble mien,
And awful grandeur in their form are seen,

Now in disgrace: what though by time is spread,
Polluting dust o'er every reverend head;
What though beneath yon gilded tribe they lie,
And dull observers pass insulting by:
Forbid it shame, forbid it decent awe,
What seems so grave, should no attention draw!
Come, let us then with reverend step advance,
And greet—the ancient worthies of Romance.
Hence, ye profane! I feel a former dread,
A thousand visions float around my head:
Hark! hollow blasts through empty courts resound,
And shadowy forms with staring eyes stalk round;
See! moats and bridges, walls and castles rise,
Ghosts, fairies, dæmons, dance before our eyes;
Lo! magic verse inscrib'd on golden gate,
And bloody hand that beckons on to fate;—
"And who art thou, thou little page, unfold?
Say, doth thy lord my Claribel withhold;
Go tell him straight, Sir Knight, thou must resign
The captive queen:—for, Claribel is mine."
Away he flies; and now for bloody deeds,
Black suits of armour, masks, and foaming steeds;
The giant falls; his recreant throat I seize,
And from his corslet take the massy keys:—
Dukes, lords, and knights, in long procession move,
Releas'd from bondage with my virgin love;—
She comes! she comes! in all the charms of youth,
Unequall'd love and unsuspected truth!
Ah! happy he who thus in magic themes,
O'er worlds bewitch'd, in early rapture dreams,
Where wild enchantment waves her potent wand,
And fancy's beauties fill her fairy land;
Where doubtful objects strange desires excite,
And fear and ignorance afford delight.
But lost, for ever lost, to me these joys,
Which reason scatters and which time destroys,
Too dearly bought; maturer judgment calls
My busied mind, from tales and madrigals;
My doughty giants all are slain or fled,
And all my knights, blue, green, and yellow, dead
No more the midnight fairy tribe I view,
All in the merry moonshine tippling dew;
Ev'n the last lingering fiction of the brain,
The churchyard ghost, is now at rest again;
And all these wayward wanderings of my youth,
Fly reason's power and shun the light of truth.
With fiction then does real joy reside,
And is our reason the delusive guide?
Is it then right to dream the syrens sing?
Or mount enraptur'd on the dragon's wing?
No, 'tis the infant mind, to care unknown,
That makes th' imagin'd paradise its own;
Soon as reflections in the bosom rise,
Light slumbers vanish from the clouded eyes;
The tear and smile, that once together rose,
Are then divorc'd; the head and heart are foes;
Enchantment bows to wisdom's serious plan,
And pain and prudence make and mar the man.

While thus, of power and fancy'd empire vain,
With various thoughts my mind I entertain;
While books my slaves, with tyrant hand I seize,
Pleas'd with the pride that will not let them please;
Sudden I find terrific thoughts arise,
And sympathetic sorrow fills my eyes;
For, lo! while yet my heart admits the wound,
I see the critic army rang'd around.
Foes to our race! if ever ye have known
A father's fears for offspring of your own;—
If ever, smiling o'er a lucky line,
Ye thought the sudden sentiment divine,
Then paus'd and doubted, and then, tir'd of doubt,
With rage as sudden dash'd the stanza out;—
If, after fearing much and pausing long,
Ye ventur'd on the world your labour'd song,
And from the crusty critics of those days,
Implor'd the feeble tribute of their praise;
Remember now, the fears that mov'd you then,
And, spite of truth, let mercy guide your pen.

What vent'rous race are ours! what mighty foes,
Lie waiting all around them to oppose!
What treacherous friends betray them to the fight!
What dangers threaten them! yet still they write:
A hapless tribe! to every evil born,
Whom villains hate and fools affect to scorn:
Strangers they come, amid a world of woe,
And taste the largest portion ere they go.
Pensive I spoke, and cast mine eyes around;
The roof, methought, return'd a solemn sound;
Each column seem'd to shake, and clouds, like smoke,
From dusty piles and ancient volumes broke;
Gathering above, like mists condens'd they seem,
Exhal'd in summer from the rushy stream;
Like flowing robes they now appear, and twine
Round the large members of a form divine;
His silver beard, that swept his aged breast,
His piercing eye, that inward light express'd,
Were seen—but clouds and darkness veil'd the rest.
Fear chill'd my heart; to one of mortal race,
How awful seem'd the genius of the place!
So in Cimmerian shores, Ulysses saw
His parent-shade, and shrunk in pious awe;
Like him I stood, and wrapt in thought profound,
When from the pitying power broke forth a solemn sound:—
"Care lives with all; no rules, no precepts save
The wise from woe, no fortitude the brave:
Grief is to man as certain as the grave;
Tempests and storms in life's whole progress rise,
And hope shines dimly through o'erclouded skies;
Some drops of comfort on the favour'd fall,
But showers of sorrow are the lot of *all:*
Partial to talents, then, shall heav'n withdraw
Th' afflicting rod, or break the general law?
Shall he who soars, inspir'd by loftier views,
Life's little cares and little pains refuse?
Shall he not rather feel a double share
Of mortal woe, when doubly arm'd to bear?
"Hard is his fate who builds his peace of mind
On the precarious mercy of mankind;
Who hopes for wild and visionary things,
And mounts o'er unknown seas with vent'rous wings:
But as, of various evils that befall
The human race, some portion goes to all;
To him perhaps the milder lot's assign'd,
Who feels his consolation in his mind;
And lock'd within his bosom, bears about
A mental charm for every care, without.
Ev'n in the pangs of each domestic grief,
Or health or vigorous hope affords relief;
And every wound the tortur'd bosom feels,
Or virtue bears, or some preserver heals;
Some generous friend, of ample power possess'd;
Some feeling heart, that bleeds for the distress'd;
Some breast that glows with virtues all divine;
Some noble Rutland, misery's friend and thine.
"Nor say, the muses' song, the poet's pen,
Merit the scorn they meet from little men.
With cautious freedom if the numbers flow,
Not wildly high, not pitifully low;
If vice alone their honest aims oppose,
Why so asham'd their friends, so loud their foes?
Happy for men in every age and clime,
If all the sons of vision dealt in rhyme.
Go on then, son of vision! still pursue
The airy dreams; the world is dreaming too.
Ambition's lofty views, the pomp of state,
The pride of wealth, the splendour of the great,
Stript of their mask, their cares and troubles known,
Are visions far less happy than thy own:
Go on! and, while the sons of care complain,
Be wisely gay and innocently vain
While serious souls are by their fears undone,
Blow sportive bladders in the beamy sun,
And call them worlds! and bid the greatest show
More radiant colours in their worlds below:
Then, as they break, the slaves of care reprove,
And tell them, such are all the toys they love."

SIR EUSTACE GREY.

Scene—A MADHOUSE.——*Persons*—VISITOR, PHYSICIAN, AND PATIENT.

VISITOR.

I'LL know no more;—the heart is torn
By views of woe, we cannot heal;
Long shall I see these things forlorn,
And oft again their griefs shall feel,
As each upon the mind shall steal;
That wan projector's mystic style,
That lumpish idiot leering by,
That peevish idler's ceaseless wile,
And that poor maiden's half-form'd smile,
While struggling for the full-drawn sigh!...
I'll know no more.

PHYSICIAN.

... Yes, turn again;
Then speed to happier scenes thy way,
When thou hast view'd, what yet remain,
The ruins of Sir Eustace Grey,
The sport of madness, misery's prey:
But he will no historian need,
His cares, his crimes will he display,
And show (as one from frenzy freed)
The proud-lost mind, the rash-done deed.

That cell, to him is Greyling Hall:—
Approach; he'll bid thee welcome there;
Will sometimes for his servant call,
And sometimes point the vacant chair:
He can, with free and easy air,
Appear attentive and polite;
Can veil his woes in manners fair,
And pity with respect excite.

PATIENT.

Who comes?—Approach!—'Tis kindly done:—
My learn'd physician, and a friend,
Their pleasures quit, to visit one,
Who cannot to their ease attend,
Nor joys bestow, nor comforts lend,
As when I liv'd so blest, so well,
And dream'd not, I must soon contend
With those malignant powers of hell.

PHYSICIAN.

"Less warmth, Sir Eustace, or we go."—

PATIENT.

See! I am calm as infant-love,
A very child, but one of woe,
Whom you should pity, not reprove:—
But men at ease, who never strove
With passions wild, will calmly show,
How soon we may their ills remove,
And masters of their madness grow.

Some twenty years I think are gone—
(Time flies, I know not how, away)
The sun upon no happier shone,
Nor prouder man, than Eustace Grey.
Ask where you would, and all would say,
The man admir'd and prais'd of all,
By rich and poor, by grave and gay,
Was the young lord of Greyling Hall

Yes! I had youth and rosy health;
Was nobly form'd, as man might be;
For sickness then, of all my wealth,
I never gave a single fee:
The ladies fair, the maidens free,
Were all accustom'd then to say,
Who would an handsome figure see,
Should look upon Sir Eustace Grey.

He had a frank and pleasant look,
A cheerful eye and accent bland;
His very speech and manner spoke
The generous heart, the open hand;
About him all was gay or grand,
He had the praise of great and small;
He bought, improv'd, projected, plann'd,
And reign'd a prince at Greyling Hall.

My lady!—she was all we love;
All praise (to speak her worth) is faint;
Her manners show'd the yielding dove,
Her morals, the seraphic saint;
She never breath'd nor look'd complaint,
No equal upon earth had she:...
Now, what is this fair thing I paint?
Alas! as all that live, shall be.

There was beside, a gallant youth,
And him my bosom's friend, I had:...
Oh! I was rich—in very truth,
It made me proud—it made me mad!—
Yes, I was lost—but there was cause!....
Where stood my tale?—I cannot find—
But I had all mankind's applause,
And all the smiles of woman kind.

There were two cherub-things beside,
A gracious girl, a glorious boy;
Yet more to swell my full-blown pride,
To varnish higher my fading joy,
Pleasures were ours without alloy,
Nay paradise,... till my frail Eve
Our bliss was tempted to destroy;
Deceiv'd and fated to deceive.

But I deserv'd; for all that time,
When I was lov'd, admir'd, caress'd,
There was within, each secret crime,
Unfelt, uncancell'd, unconfess'd;
I never then my God address'd,
In grateful praise or humble prayer;
And if his word was not my jest!
(Dread thought!) it never was my care.

I doubted:—fool I was to doubt!
If that all-piercing eye could see—
If He who looks all worlds throughout,
Would so minute and careful be,
As to perceive and punish me:—
With man I would be great and high,
But with my God so lost, that He,
In his large view, should pass me by.

Thus blest with children, friend, and wife,
Blest far beyond the vulgar lot;
Of all that gladdens human life,
Where was the good, that I had not?
But my vile heart had sinful spot,
And heaven beheld its deep'ning stain,
Eternal justice I forgot,
And mercy, sought not to obtain.

Come near,... I'll softly speak the rest!—
Alas! 'tis known to all the crowd,
Her guilty love was all confest;
And his, who so much truth avow'd,
My faithless friend.—In pleasure proud
I sat, when these curs'd tidings came;
Their guilt, their flight was told aloud,
And Envy smil'd to hear my shame!

I call'd on vengeance; at the word
She came:—can I the deed forget!
I held the sword, th' accursed sword,
The blood of his false heart made wet:
And that fair victim paid her debt,
She pin'd, she died, she loath'd to live;...
I saw her dying—see her yet:
Fair fallen thing! my rage forgive!

Those cherubs still, my life to bless,
Were left; could I my fears remove,
Sad fears that check'd each fond caress,
And poison'd all parental love:
Yet that, with jealous feelings strove,
And would at last have won my will,
Had I not, wretch! been doom'd to prove
Th' extremes of mortal good and ill.

In youth! health! joy! in beauty's pride!
They droop'd: as flowers when blighted bow,
The dire infection came:—They died,
And I was curs'd—as I am now...
Nay frown not, angry friend—allow,
That I was deeply, sorely tried;
Hear then, and you must wonder how
I could such storms and strifes abide.

Storms!—not that clouds embattled make,
When they afflict this earthly globe;
But such as with their terrors shake
Man's breast, and to the bottom probe;
They make the hypocrite disrobe,
They try us all, if false or true;
For this, one devil had pow'r on Job;
And I was long the slave of two.

PHYSICIAN.

Peace, peace, my friend; these subjects fly;
Collect thy thoughts—go calmly on.—

PATIENT.

And shall I then the fact deny?
I was, thou know'st, I was begone,
Like him who fill'd the eastern throne,
To whom the Watcher cried aloud;*
That royal wretch of Babylon,
Who was so guilty and so proud.

Like him with haughty, stubborn mind,
I, in my state, my comforts sought;
Delight and praise I hop'd to find,
In what I builded, planted, bought!
Oh! arrogance! by misery taught—
Soon came a voice! I felt it come;
"Full be his cup, with evil fraught,
Dæmons his guides, and death his doom!"

Then was I cast from out my state;
Two fiends of darkness led my way;
They wak'd me early, watch'd me late,
My dread by night, my plague by day!
Oh! I was made their sport, their play,
Through many a stormy troubled year,
And how they us'd their passive prey,
Is sad to tell: but you shall hear.

And first, before they sent me forth,
Through this unpitying world to run,
They robb'd Sir Eustace of his worth,
Lands, manors, lordships, every one;
So was that gracious man undone,
Was spurn'd as vile, was scorn'd as poor,
Whom every former friend would shun,
And menials drove from every door.

Then those ill-favour'd ones,† whom none
But my unhappy eyes could view,
Led me, with wild emotion on,
And, with resistless terror, drew.

Through lands we fled, o'er seas we flew,
And halted on a boundless plain;
Where nothing fed, nor breath'd nor grew,
But silence rul'd the still domain.

Upon that boundless plain, below,
The setting sun's last rays were shed,
And gave a mild and sober glow,
Where all were still, asleep or dead;
Vast ruins in the midst were spread,
Pillars and pediments sublime,
Where the grey moss had form'd a bed,
And cloth'd the crumbling spoils of time.

There was I fix'd, I know not how,
Condemn'd for untold years to stay;
Yet years were not;—one dreadful *Now*,
Endur'd no change of night or day;
The same mild evening's sleeping ray,
Shone softly-solemn and serene,
And all that time, I gaz'd away,
The setting sun's sad rays were seen.

At length a moment's sleep stole on—
Again came my commission'd foes;
Again through sea and land we're gone,
No peace, no respite, no repose;
Above the dark broad sea we rose,
We ran through bleak and frozen land;
I had no strength, their strength t' oppose,
An infant in a giant's hand.

They plac'd me where those streamers play,
Those nimble beams of brilliant light;
It would the stoutest heart dismay,
To see, to feel, that dreadful sight:
So swift, so pure, so cold, so bright,
They pierc'd my frame with icy wound,
And all that half-year's polar night,
Those dancing streamers wrapt me round.

Slowly that darkness pass'd away,
When down upon the earth I fell—
Some hurried sleep, was mine by day;
But soon as toll'd the evening bell,
They forc'd me on, where ever dwell
Far-distant men in cities fair,
Cities of whom no travellers tell,
Nor feet but mine were wanderers there.

Their watchmen stare, and stand aghast,
As on we hurry through the dark;
The watch-light blinks, as we go past,
The watch-dog shrinks and fears to bark;
The watch-tower's bell sounds shrill; and, hark!
The free wind blows—we've left the town—
A wide sepulchral ground I mark,
And on a tomb-stone place me down.

What monuments of mighty dead!
What tombs of various kinds are found!
And stones erect, their shadows shed,
On humble graves, with wickers bound:
Some risen fresh, above the ground,
Some level with the native clay,
What sleeping millions wait the sound,
"Arise, ye dead, and come away!"

Alas! they stay not for that call;
Spare me this woe! ye dæmons, spare!—
They come! the shrouded shadows all—
'Tis more than mortal brain can bear!
Rustling they rise, they sternly glare
At man upheld by vital breath;
Who led by wicked fiends should dare
To join the shadowy troops of death!

Yes! I have felt all man can feel,
Till he shall pay his nature's debt;
Ills that no hope has strength to heal,
No mind the comfort to forget:

* Prophecy of Daniel, chap. iv. 22.
† See Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

Whatever cares the heart can fret,
The spirits wear, the temper gall;
Woe, want, dread, anguish, all beset
My sinful soul!—together all!

Those fiends, upon a shaking fen,
Fix'd me, in dark tempestuous night;
There never trod the foot of men,
There flock'd the fowl in wint'ry flight;
There danc'd the moor's deceitful light,
Above the pool where sedges grow;
And when the morning-sun shone bright,
It shone upon a field of snow.

They hung me on a bough, so small,
The rook could build her nest no higher;
They fix'd me on the trembling ball,
That crowns the steeple's quiv'ring spire;
They set me where the seas retire,
But drown with their returning tide;
And made me flee the mountain's fire,
When rolling from its burning side.

I've hung upon the ridgy steep
Of cliffs, and held the rambling briar;
I've plung'd below the billowy deep,
Where air was sent me to respire;
I've been where hungry wolves retire;
And (to complete my woes) I've ran,
Where bedlam's crazy crew conspire
Against the life of reasoning man.

I've furl'd in storms the flapping sail,
By hanging from the top-mast-head;
I've serv'd the vilest slaves in jail,
And pick'd the dunghill's spoil for bread;
I've made the badger's hole my bed,
I've wander'd with a gipsey crew,
I've dreaded all the guilty dread,
And done what they would fear to do.

On sand where ebbs and flows the flood,
Midway they plac'd and bade me die;
Propt on my staff, I stoutly stood
When the swift waves came rolling by;
And high they rose, and still more high,
Till my lips drank the bitter brine;
I sobb'd convuls'd, then cast mine eye
And saw the tide's re-flowing sign.

And then, my dreams were such as nought
Could yield but my unhappy case;
I've been of thousand devils caught,
And thrust into that horrid place,
Where reign dismay, despair, disgrace;
Furies with iron fangs were there,
To torture that accursed race,
Doom'd to dismay, disgrace, despair.

Harmless I was; yet hunted down
For treasons, to my soul unfit;
I've been pursued through many a town,
For crimes that petty knaves commit:
I've been adjudg'd t' have lost my wit,
Because I preach'd so loud and well,
And thrown into the dungeon's pit,
For trampling on the pit of hell.

Such were the evils, Man of Sin,
That I was fated to sustain;
And add to all, without—within,
A soul defil'd with every stain,
That man's reflecting mind can pain;
That pride, wrong, rage, despair can make;
In fact, they'd nearly touch'd my brain,
And reason on her throne would shake.

But pity will the vilest seek,
If punish'd guilt will not repine—
I heard an heavenly teacher speak,
And felt the Sun of Mercy shine:
I hail'd the light! the birth divine!
And then was seal'd among the few,
Those angry fiends beheld the sign;
And from me in an instant flew.

Come hear how thus, the charmers cry,
To wandering sheep the strays of sin;
While some the wicket-gate pass by,
And some will knock and enter in;
Full joyful 'tis a soul to win,
For he that winneth souls is wise;
Now hark! the holy strains begin,
And thus the sainted preacher cries:—*

"Pilgrim burthen'd with thy sin,
Come the way to Zion's gate,
There, till Mercy lets thee in,
Knock and weep and watch and wait.
Knock!—He knows the sinner's cry:
Weep!—He loves the mourner's tears:
Watch!—for saving grace is nigh:
Wait—till heavenly light appears.

"Hark! it is the bridegroom's voice:
Welcome, pilgrim, to thy rest;
Now within the gate rejoice,
Safe and seal'd and bought and blest!
Safe—from all the lures of vice,
Seal'd—by signs the chosen know,
Bought by love and life the price,
Blest—the mighty debt to owe.

"Holy pilgrim! what for thee,
In a world like this remain?
From thy guarded breast shall flee,
Fear and shame, and doubt and pain.
Fear—the hope of heaven shall fly,
Shame—from glory's view retire,
Doubt—in certain rapture die,
Pain—in endless bliss expire."

But though my day of grace was come,
Yet still my days of grief I find;
The former clouds' collected gloom,
Still sadden the reflecting mind;
The soul to evil things consign'd,
Will of their evil some retain;
The man will seem to earth inclin'd,
And will not look erect again.

Thus, though elect, I feel it hard,
To lose what I possess'd before,
To be from all my wealth debarr'd—
The brave Sir Eustace is no more
But old I wax and passing poor,
Stern, rugged men my conduct view;
They chide my wish, they bar my door,
'Tis hard—I weep—you see I do.

Must you, my friends, no longer stay?
Thus quickly all my pleasures end?
But I'll remember, when I pray,
My kind physician and his friend;
And those sad hours, you deign to spend
With me, I shall requite them all;
Sir Eustace for his friends shall send,
And thank their love at Greyling Hall.

VISITOR.

The poor Sir Eustace!—Yet his hope
Leads him to think of joys again;
And when his earthly visions droop,
His views of heavenly kind remain:—

* It has been suggested to me, that this change from restlessness to repose, in the mind of Sir Eustace, is wrought by a methodistic call; and it is admitted to be such: a sober and rational conversion could not have happened while the disorder of the brain continued. Yet the verses which follow, in a different measure, are not intended to make any religious persuasion appear ridiculous; they are to be supposed as the effect of memory in the disordered mind of the speaker, and, though evidently enthusiastic, in respect to language, are not meant to convey any impropriety of sentiment.

But whence that meek and humbled strain,
That spirit wounded, lost, resign'd ;
Would not so proud a soul disdain
The madness of the poorest mind ?

PHYSICIAN.

No ! for the more he swell'd with pride,
The more he felt misfortune's blow ;
Disgrace and grief he could not hide,
And poverty had laid him low :
Thus shame and sorrow working slow,
At length this humble spirit gave ;
Madness on these began to grow,
And bound him to his fiends a slave.

Though the wild thoughts had touch'd his brain,
Then was he free :—so, forth he ran ;
To soothe or threat, alike were vain ;
He spake of fiends ; look'd wild and wan ;
Year after year, the hurried man
Obey'd those fiends from place to place ;
Till his religious change began
To form a frenzied child of grace.

For, as the fury lost its strength,
The mind repos'd ; by slow degrees,
Came lingering hope, and brought at length,
To the tormented spirit, ease :
This slave of sin, whom fiends could seize,
Felt or believ'd their power had end ;—
"'Tis faith," he cried, "my bosom frees,
And now my Saviour is my friend."

But ah ! though time can yield relief,
And soften woes it cannot cure ;
Would we not suffer pain and grief,
To have our reason sound and sure ?
Then let us keep our bosoms pure,
Our fancy's favourite flights suppress ;
Prepare the body to endure,
And bend the mind to meet distress ;
And then His guardian care implore,
Whom dæmons dread and men adore.

WOMAN!

MR LEDYARD, as quoted by MUNGO PARK, in his *Travels into Africa*.

"To a Woman I never addressed myself in the language of decency and friendship, without receiving a decent and friendly answer. If I was hungry or thirsty, wet or sick, they did not hesitate, like men, to perform a generous action: In so free and kind a manner did they contribute to my relief, that if I was dry, I drank the sweetest draught; and if hungry, I ate the coarsest morsel with a double relish."

PLACE the white man on Afric's coast,
Whose swarthy sons in blood delight,
Who of their scorn to Europe boast,
And paint their very dæmons white :
There while the sterner sex disdains
To soothe the woes, they cannot feel ;
Woman will strive to heal his pains,
And weep for those, she cannot heal ;
Hers is warm pity's sacred glow ;
From all her stores, she bears a part,
And bids the spring of hope re-flow,
That languish'd in the fainting heart.
"What though so pale his haggard face,
So sunk and sad his looks"—she cries ;
"And far unlike our nobler race,
With crisped locks and rolling eyes ;
Yet misery marks him of our kind,
We see him lost, alone, afraid ;
And pangs of body, griefs in mind,
Pronounce him man and ask our aid.
"Perhaps in some far distant shore,
There are who in these forms delight ;
Whose milky features please them more,
Than ours of jet thus burnish'd bright ;
Of such may be his weeping wife,
Such children for their sire may call,
And if we spare his ebbing life,
Our kindness may preserve them all."
Thus her compassion woman shows,
Beneath the Line her acts are these ;
Nor the wide waste of Lapland snows,
Can her warm flow of pity freeze :—
"From some sad land the stranger comes,
Where joys, like ours, are never found ;
Let's soothe him in our happy homes,
Where freedom sits, with plenty crown'd.

"'Tis good the fainting soul to cheer,
To see the famish'd stranger fed ;
To milk for him the mother deer,
To smooth for him the furry bed.
The powers above, our Lapland bless,
With good no other people know ;
T' enlarge the joys that we possess,
By feeling those that we bestow !"

Thus in extremes of cold and heat,
Where wandering man may trace his kind ;
Wherever grief and want retreat,
In woman they compassion find ;
She makes the female breast her seat,
And dictates mercy to the mind.

Man may the sterner virtues know,
Determin'd justice, truth severe :
But female hearts with pity glow,
And woman holds affliction dear ;
For guiltless woes her sorrows flow,
And suffering vice compels her tear ;
'Tis hers to soothe the ills below,
And bid life's fairer views appear ;
To woman's gentle kind we owe,
What comforts and delights us here ;
They its gay hopes on youth bestow,
And care they soothe and age they cheer.

THE END.

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY W. AND R. CHAMBERS, 19, WATERLOO PLACE.

PEOPLE'S EDITION.

ANSTER FAIR,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

WILLIAM TENNANT.

WITH A

PREFATORY MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR AND HIS WRITINGS.

EDINBURGH:

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS;
W. S. ORR AND COMPANY, LONDON; W. CURRY JUNIOR AND COMPANY,
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1838.

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PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION—MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR AND HIS WRITINGS.

The author of *Anster Fair* is a native of Anstruther, the town which he has endeavoured to celebrate in his poem—a royal burgh on the south-eastern shore of the county of Fife, noted also as the birth-place of the most celebrated pulpit orator of our times, Dr Chalmers. These two alumni of the same parish school, possessing, as it appears, the same enthusiasm for mental achievement, shot out in very different directions, the one as a playful and romantic poet, the other as a serious and romantic preacher—each original in his peculiar department, and each endowed with a dash of powerful, yet at times puerile, though richly diversified invention. After receiving, from the town schools, all the instruction, vernacular and classical, which was there supplied, Mr Tennant, for further advancement, was sent in 1799 to the University of St Andrews, where he had the happiness of attending the prelections of Dr Hunter and Dr Hill, by both of whom his taste for classical learning was encouraged and confirmed. Circumstances prevented the prosecution of his studies at that university longer than two years. He left it in May 1801, and not long thereafter became clerk to his brother, then corn-factor, first at Glasgow (in 1803-4), and latterly at Anstruther (1805-6, &c.), in which distracted and precarious situation, he, by a studious disposition of time, found opportunities of cultivating the muses in secret, and of reading in their own languages the productions of the most celebrated poets of ancient and modern Europe. Homer, Virgil, Ariosto, Wieland, Camoëns, were all perused during the intervals of counting-house employment. Nor did he less gratify his literary curiosity in the severer and more dignified studies: history and archæology—Herodotus, Thucydides, and Livy—were studied with equal avidity. Above all descriptions of literature, he delighted in the books of the Hebrew writers, which, apart from all considerations of another kind of importance, he regarded, and still regards, as containing the finest and sublimest poetry to be found in the world. As a literary anecdote, and at the same time as an excitement to the juvenile student, it may be mentioned, that Mr Tennant's first reading of the Hebrew Bible was accomplished in half a year and three days, with no assistance but the grammar and dictionary. It may be instructive also to consider how this passion for Hebrew literature, cultivated at an early period of life and in secret, unencouraged and unpatronised, brought, thirty years thereafter, its own reward.

In the year 1811, being in his 27th year, and living in his father's house at Anstruther, much perplexed by commercial embarrassments into which he had been innocently drawn, he conceived and wrote his poem of *Anster Fair*, which, in the course of the ensuing year, was produced anonymously, in a small volume of plain appearance, by the bookseller of his native town.

Its provincial origin, limited sale, and perhaps, in some degree, the startling novelty of manner which characterised the poem, contributed to keep it in obscurity for more than a twelvemonth. The late Lord Woodhouselee, so distinguished as a polished scholar and critic, appears to have been the first member of the metropolitan learned world to become aware of the merits of the poem. In August 1812, he addressed the following letter to Mr Cockburn, the Anstruther publisher:—

"Sir—I have lately read, with a very high degreo of pleasure, a small poetical performance, which I observe bears your name as publisher on the title-page. The author of *Anster Fair* cannot long remain concealed. It contains, in my opinion, unequivocal marks of strong original genius; a vein of humour of an uncommon cast, united with a talent for natural description of the most vivid and characteristic species, and, above all, a true feeling of the sublime—forming altogether one of the most pleasing and singular combinations of the different powers of poetry that I have ever met with. Unless the author has very strong reasons for concealing his name, I must own that I should be much gratified by being informed of it. Alex. Fraser Tytler."

The notice of a few other such critics soon brought the name of the author before the public; and in the latter part of 1814, the merits of the poem were blazoned to the world at large by a generous notice from the pen of Mr Jeffrey in the Edinburgh Review.

"We consider this volume," says the writer, "not only as eminently original, but as belonging to a class of composition hitherto but little known in the literature of this country—to that species, we mean, of gay or fantastic poetry which plays through the works of Pulci and Ariosto, and animates the compositions of many inferior writers both in Spain and in Italy—which is equally removed from the vulgarity of mere burlesque or mock-heroic, and from the sarcasm and point and finesse of satirical pleasantry—which is extravagant rather than ridiculous, and displays only the vague and unbounded licence of a sportive and raised imagination, without the cold pungency of wit, or the practised sagacity of derision. It frequently relaxes into childishness, and is sometimes concentrated to humour; but its leading character is a kind of enthusiastic gaiety—a certain intoxication and nimbleness of fancy, which pours out a profusion of images without much congruity or selection, and covers all the objects to which it is directed, with colours that are rather brilliant than harmonious, and combines them into groups that are more lively than graceful. This effervescence of the spirits has been hitherto supposed almost peculiar to the warmer regions of the south; and the poetry in which it naturally exhales itself, seems as if it could only find a suitable vehicle in their plastic and flexible idioms, or a fitting audience among the susceptible races by whom they were framed.

We are by no means certain that the present attempt will unsettle that opinion; and are very far from thinking, either that its success has been perfect, or that the author has been fortunate in the choice of a subject, or in all of the details of his execution. The attempt, however, is bold and vigorous; and indicates both talent and enterprise that may hereafter be more worthily employed. Hitherto, it is proper to mention, they have been exerted under circumstances the most unpropitious; for Mr Tennant is a kind of prodigy as well as Mr Hogg—and his book would be entitled to notice as a curiosity, even if its pretensions were much smaller than they are on the score of its literary merit." * *

"The subject, which we do not think very fortunately chosen, is borrowed from some ancient legends, respecting the marriage choice of a fair lady, whose beauty is still celebrated in the ballads and traditions of Mr Tennant's native district, and whose hand, it seems, was held out as the reward of the victor in an ass race, and a match of running in sacks—a competition of bagpiping, and of story-telling. Upon this homely foundation Mr Tennant has erected a vast superstructure of description, and expended a great treasure of poetry. He has also engrafted upon it the airy and ticklish machinery of Shakspeare's, or rather of Wieland's Oberon—though he has given the less adventurous name of Puck to his ministering spirit, who, with the female fairy to whom he is wedded, patronises the victor in these successive contentions, and secures not only his success, but his acceptance with the devoted fair." * *

"The great charm of this singular composition consists, no doubt, in the profusion of images and groups which it thrusts upon the fancy, and the crowd and hurry and animation with which they are all jostled and driven along; but this, though a very rare merit in any modern production, is entitled perhaps to less

distinction than the perpetual sallies and outbreakings of a rich and poetical imagination, by which the homely themes on which the author is professedly employed are constantly ennobled or contrasted, and in which the ardour of a mind evidently fitted for higher tasks is somewhat capriciously expended. It is this frequent kindling of the diviner spirit—this tendency to rise above the trivial subjects among which he has chosen to disport himself, and this power of connecting grand or beautiful conceptions with the representation of vulgar objects or ludicrous occurrences, that first recommended this poem to our notice, and still seem to us to entitle it to more general notoriety. The author is occupied, no doubt, in general, with low matters, and bent upon homely mirth, but his genius soars up every now and then in spite of him; and 'his delights'—to use a quaint expression of Shakspeare—

> 'his delights
> Are dolphin-like, and show their backs above
> The element they move in.'"

With reference to the allusion to Mr Hogg, whose *Queen's Wake* was the subject of the antecedent article, it may be mentioned, that the latter individual always protested against the propriety of putting Mr Tennant and him into one category, as authors who had cultivated poetry in lowly and difficult circumstances, seeing that the Anstruther poet was, even at this early period of his life, a man of extensive and varied learning, while he of Ettrick was a totally uneducated shepherd. There was some justice in this remark; but it must be allowed that the reviewer was quite right in applauding Mr Tennant for the zeal and success with which he had unassistedly prosecuted those studies which gave him the advantage pointed out by Mr Hogg. The *Anster Fair*, when fully known, experienced considerable popularity, and was several times printed. It is worthy of observation, that it proved the means of reviving a form of stanza—the *ottava rima*—which the English poets of the sixteenth century derived from the Italian, but which had since then fallen into complete disuse. Some years after, this stanza was also used by Lord Byron in his *Beppo*, without any acknowledgment of its having been suggested to him by the *Anster Fair*. He afterwards employed it in *Don Juan;* and it became a favourite mode with other poets, particularly Mr Hookham Frere, though without the two additional syllables to the concluding lines, which Mr Tennant had thought desirable for the sake of impressiveness.

Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1813, the author of *Anster Fair* was preferred to the situation of schoolmaster in the parish of Denino, an upland district at the eastern angle of Fife, between Anstruther and St Andrews. The office brought him an income of about forty pounds a-year, and was to be rejoiced in by the poet chiefly for its giving him rural quiet, and access to the library of the neighbouring university. He here continued his studies with all his former assiduity, and by means of books, without a master, acquainted himself with the Arabic, Syriac, and Persian languages. In respect of society, he would have been in a truly desolate condition, but for the friendship of a very accomplished country gentleman of his neighbourhood, Hugh Cleghorn, Esq. of Stravithie. He continued to officiate at Denino till 1816, when, chiefly through the kind intervention of Mr George Thomson, of Edinburgh, well known as the friend and correspondent of Burns, he was transferred to the more lucrative situation of parish schoolmaster at Lasswade, a village delightfully situated on the Esk, about six miles to the south of Edinburgh. The appointment was valuable, from its bringing Mr Tennant into contact with the literary men of the capital. He performed the duties of his laborious function at Lasswade till January 1819, when he was elected by the trustees of Dollar Institution to be the teacher of classical and oriental languages in that new and rising seminary. He there officiated till the beginning of 1835, when he attained a fit summit to the ambition of a modest scholar of his peculiar tastes, in being appointed by the crown to the vacant chair of Oriental Languages in St Mary's College at St Andrews. Since that time Mr Tennant has spent his winters at St Andrews, in the exercise of the duties of his professorship, though he still (1838) resides, during the summer months, at his beautifully situated villa of Devongrove, near Dollar.

Since the publication of *Anster Fair*, Mr Tennant has given to the world *The Thane of Fife*, a poem, *Cardinal Beaton*, a tragedy, and a spirited descriptive poem in the manner of Sir David Lyndsay, under the title of *The Dinging Down of the Cathedral*—meaning the metropolitan church of Scotland at St Andrews, which was destroyed by the followers of Knox in one day.

It should perhaps have been mentioned, at an earlier part of this brief memoir, that Mr Tennant, though born without any personal malformation, lost, at an early period of his childhood, the use of his feet, so that all his motions through life have been performed on crutches. We have heard him state, that this, instead of diminishing his enjoyment of life, has rather added to it, and instead of retarding, has rather promoted his advance in the world, having not only tended to concentrate his mind upon his studies, but also to procure for him a sympathising friendship in many quarters where he had no other claim. We are to recollect, however, that lameness was, in his case, connected with none of that proud impatience which made it a source of unmingled misery to Byron, but with a temper of the serenest and blandest elements, which no friend, to our knowledge, has ever seen ruffled.

The present edition of *Anster Fair* comes before the world by virtue of an arrangement between Mr Tennant and the publishers, who were anxious that their series of cheap Standard Works, and more particularly their series of the Scottish Poets, should be graced by a work combining the humour of James the First and Dunbar, with that of Ariosto and Tassoni, and which, they are persuaded, nothing but *price* could have so long kept out of the hands of the humblest as well as the highest of the people. In addition to the main poem, they have been enabled to present a selection of Mr Tennant's shorter pieces, chiefly in the department of the familiar and the humorous.

ORIGINAL (AUTHOR'S) PREFACE.

The following poem is presented to the public with that diffidence and anxiety which every young author feels when the good or bad fate of his first production must check his rashness and vanity, or enliven his future efforts with the confidence arising from popular approbation.

The poem is written in stanzas of octave rhyme, or the *ottava rima* of the Italians, a measure said to be invented by Boccaccio, and after him employed by Tasso and Ariosto. From these writers it was transferred into English poetry by Fairfax, in his translation of "Jerusalem Delivered," but since his days, has been by our poets, perhaps, too little cultivated. The stanza of Fairfax is here shut with the Alexandrine of Spenser, that its close may be more full and sounding.

In a humorous poem, partly descriptive of Scottish manners, it was impossible to avoid using Scottish words. These, however, will, it is hoped, be found not too many. Some old English words are likewise admitted.

The transactions of Anster Fair may be supposed to have taken place during the reign of James V.—a monarch whom tradition reports to have had many gamesome rambles in Fife, and with whose liveliness and jollity of temper the merriment of the Fair did not ill accord. Yet a scrupulous congruity with the modes of his times was not intended, and must not be expected. Ancient and modern manners are mixed and jumbled together, to heighten the humour, or variegate the description.

Edinburgh, 23d June 1814.

ANSTER FAIR.

CANTO I.

I.

While some of Troy and pettish heroes sing,
And some of Rome and chiefs of pious fame,
And some of men that thought it harmless thing
To smite off heads in Mars's bloody game,
And some of Eden's garden gay with spring,
And Hell's dominions terrible to name—
I sing a theme far livelier, happier, gladder,
I sing of Anster Fair, and bonny Maggie Lauder.

II.

What time from east, from west, from south, from north,
From every hamlet, town, and smoky city,
Laird, clown, and beau, to Anster Fair came forth,
The young, the gay, the handsome, and the witty,
To try in various sport and game their worth,
Whilst prize before them Maggie sat, the pretty,
And after many a feat, and joke, and banter,
Fair Maggie's hand was won by mighty Rob the Ranter.

III.

Muse, that from top of thine old Greekish hill,
Didst the harp-fing'ring Theban younker view,
And on his lips bid bees their sweets distil,
And gav'st the chariot that the white swans drew,
Oh let me scoop, from thine ethereal rill,
Some little palmfuls of the blessed dew,
And lend the swan-drawn car, that safely I,
Like him, may scorn the earth, and burst into the sky.

IV.

Our themes are like; for he the games extoll'd
Held in the chariot-shaken Grecian plains,
Where the vain victor, arrogant and bold,
A pickle parsley got for all his pains;
I sing of sports more worthy to be told,
Where better prize the Scottish victor gains:
What were the crowns of Greece but wind and bladder,
Compared with marriage-bed of bonny Maggie Lauder?

V.

And oh that King Apollo would but grant
A little spark of that transcendant flame,
That fir'd the Chian rhapsodist to chant
How vied the bowmen for Ulysses' dame,
And him of Rome to sing how Atalant
Plied, dart in hand, the suitor-slaught'ring game,
Till the bright gold, bowl'd forth along the grass,
Betray'd her to a spouse, and stopp'd the bounding lass!

VI.

But lo! from bosom of yon southern cloud,
I see the chariot come which Pindar bore;
I see the swans, whose white necks, arching proud,
Glitter with golden yoke, approach my shore:
For me they come; Oh Phœbus, potent god!
Spare, spare me now—enough, good king—no more—
A little spark I ask'd in moderation,
Why scorch me ev'n to death with fiery inspiration?

VII.

My pulse beats fire—my pericranium glows,
Like baker's oven, with poetic heat;
A thousand bright ideas, spurning prose,
Are in a twinkling hatch'd in Fancy's seat;
Zounds! they will fly out at my ears and nose,
If through my mouth they find not passage fleet;
I hear them buzzing deep within my noddle,
Like bees that in their hives confus'dly hum and huddle.

VIII.

How now?—what's this?—my very eyes, I trow,
Drop on my hands their base prosaic scales;
My visual orbs are purg'd from film, and lo!
Instead of Anster's turnip-bearing vales,
I see old Fairyland's mirac'lous show,
Her trees of tinsel kiss'd by freakish gales,
Her ouphes, that cloak'd in leaf-gold skim the breeze,
And fairies swarming thick as mites in rotten cheese.

IX.

I see the puny fair-chinn'd goblin rise
Suddenly glorious from his mustard pot;
I see him wave his hand in seemly wise,
And button round him tight his fulgent coat;
While Maggie Lauder, in a great surprise,
Sits startled on her chair, yet fearing not;
I see him ope his dewy lips; I hear
The strange and strict command address'd to Maggie's ear.

X.

I see the Ranter with bagpipe on back,
As to the Fair he rides jocundly on;
I see the crowds that press with speed not slack
Along each road that leads to Anster Loan;
I see the suitors, that, deep-sheath'd in sack,
Hobble and tumble, bawl and swear, and groan;
I see—but fie, thou brainish Muse! what mean
These vapourings, and brags of what by thee is seen?

XI.

Go to—be cooler, and in order tell
To all my good co-townsmen list'ning round,
How every merry incident befell,
Whereby our Loan shall ever be renown'd;
Say first, what elf or fairy could impel
Fair Mag, with wit, and wealth, and beauty crown'd,
To put her suitors to such waggish test,
And give her happy bed to him that jumped best.

XII.

'Twas on a keen December night, John Frost
Drove thro' mid air his chariot, icy-wheel'd,
And from the sky's crisp ceiling star-embost,
Whiff'd off the clouds that the pure blue conceal'd;
The hornless moon amid her brilliant host
Shone, and with silver-sheeted lake and field;
'Twas cutting cold; I'm sure, each trav'ller's nose
Was pinch'd right red that night, and numb'd were all his toes.

XIII.

Not so were Maggie Lauder's toes, as she
In her warm chamber at her supper sate
(For 'twas that hour when burgesses agree
To eat their suppers ere the night grows late).
Alone she sat, and pensive as may be
A young fair lady, wishful of a mate;
Yet with her teeth held now and then a-picking,
Her stomach to refresh, the breast-bone of a chicken.

XIV.

She thought upon her suitors, that with love
Besiege her chamber all the livelong day,
Aspiring each her virgin heart to move
With courtship's every troublesome essay—
Calling her angel, sweeting, fondling, dove,
And other nicknames in love's friv'lous way;
While she, though their addresses still she heard,
Held back from all her heart, and still no beau preferr'd.

XV.

"What, what!" quo' MAG, "must thus it be my doom
To spend my prime in maidhood's joyless state,
And waste away my sprightly body's bloom
In spouseless solitude without a mate—
Still toying with my suitors, as they come
Cringing in lowly courtship to my gate?
Fool that I am, to live unwed so long!
More fool, since I am woo'd by such a clam'rous throng!

XVI.

For was e'er heiress with much gold in chest,
And dowr'd with acres of wheat-bearing land,
By such a pack of men, in am'rous quest,
Fawningly spaniel'd to bestow her hand?
Where'er I walk, the air that feeds my breast
Is by the gusty sighs of lovers fann'd;
Each wind that blows wafts love-cards to my lap;
Whilst I—ah stupid MAG!—avoid each am'rous trap!

XVII.

Then come, let me my suitors' merits weigh,
And in the worthiest lad my spouse select:—
First, there's our ANSTER merchant, Norman Ray,
A powder'd wight with golden buttons deck'd,
That stinks with scent, and chats like popinjay,
And struts with phiz tremendously erect:
Four brigs has he that on the broad sea swim;—
He is a pompous fool—I cannot think of him.

XVIII.

Next is the maltster Andrew Strang, that takes
His seat i'the bailie's loft on Sabbath-day,
With paltry visage white as oaten cakes,
As if no blood runs gurgling in his clay;
Heav'ns! what an awkward hunch the fellow makes,
As to the priest he does the bow repay!
Yet he is rich—a very wealthy man, true—
But, by the holy rood, I will have none of Andrew.

XIX.

Then for the lairds—there's Melvil of Carnbee,
A handsome gallant, and a beau of spirit;
Who can go down the dance so well as he?
And who can fiddle with such manly merit?
Ay, but he is too much the debauchee—
His cheeks seem sponges oozing port and claret;
In marrying him I should bestow myself ill—
And so, I'll not have you, thou fuddler, Harry Melvil!

XX.

There's Cunningham of Barns, that still assails
With verse and billet-doux my gentle heart—
A bookish squire, and good at telling tales,
That rhymes and whines of Cupid, flame, and dart;
But, oh! his mouth a sorry smell exhales,
And on his nose sprouts horribly the wart;
What though there be a fund of lore and fun in him?
He has a rotten breath—I cannot think of Cunningham!

XXI.

Why then, there's Allardyce, that plies his suit
And battery of courtship more and more;
Spruce Lochmalonie, that with booted foot
Each morning wears the threshold of my door;
Auchmoutie too and Bruce, that persecute
My tender heart with am'rous buffets sore:—
Whom to my hand and bed should I promote?—
Eh-lah! what sight is this?—what ails my mustard-pot?"

XXII.

Here broke the lady her soliloquy;
For in a twink her pot of mustard, lo!
Self-moved, like Jove's wheel'd stool that rolls on high,
'Gan caper on her table to and fro,
And hopp'd and fidgeted before her eye,
Spontaneous, here and there, a wondrous show:
As leaps, instinct with mercury, a bladder,
So leaps the mustard-pot of bonny MAGGIE LAUDER.

XXIII.

Soon stopp'd its dance th' ignoble utensil,
When from its round and small recess there came
Thin curling wreaths of paly smoke, that still,
Fed by some magic unapparent flame,
Mount to the chamber's stucco'd roof, and fill
Each nook with fragrance, and refresh the dame:
Ne'er smelt a Phœnix-nest so sweet, I wot,
As smelt the luscious fumes of MAGGIE'S mustard-pot.

XXIV.

It reeked censer-like; then, strange to tell!
Forth from the smoke, that thick and thicker grows,
A fairy of the height of half an ell,
In dwarfish pomp, majestically rose:
His feet, upon the table 'stablish'd well,
Stood trim and splendid in their snake-skin hose;
Gleam'd topaz-like the breeches he had on,
Whose waistband like the bend of summer rainbow shone.

XXV.

His coat seem'd fashion'd of the threads of gold,
That intertwine the clouds at sun-set hour,
And, certes, Iris with her shuttle bold
Wove the rich garment in her lofty bower;
To form its buttons were the Pleiads old
Pluck'd from their sockets, sure by genie-power,
And sew'd upon the coat's resplendant hem;
Its neck was lovely green, each cuff a sapphire gem.

XXVI.

As when the churlish spirit of the Cape
To Gama, voyaging to Mozambique,
Up-popp'd from sea, a tangle-tassel'd * shape,
With mussels sticking inch-thick on his cheek,
And 'gan with tortoise-shell his limbs to scrape,
And yawn'd his monstrous blobberlips to speak;
Brave Gama's hairs stood bristled at the sight,
And on the tarry deck sunk down his men with fright.

XXVII.

So sudden (not so huge and grimly dire)
Uprose to MAGGIE'S stounded eyne the sprite,
As fair a fairy as you could desire,
With ruddy cheek, and chin and temples white;
His eyes seem'd little points of sparkling fire,
That, as he look'd, charm'd with inviting light;
He was, indeed, as bonny a fay and brisk,
As e'er on long moon-beam was seen to ride and frisk.

XXVIII.

Around his bosom, by a silken zone,
A little bagpipe gracefully was bound,
Whose pipes like hollow stalks of silver shone,
The glist'ring tiny avenues of sound;
Beneath his arm the windy bag, full blown,
Heav'd up its purple like an orange round,
And only waited orders to discharge
Its blasts with charming groan into the sky at large.

XXIX.

He wav'd his hand to MAGGIE, as she sat
Amaz'd and startl'd on her carved chair;
Then took his petty feather-garnish'd hat
In honour to the lady, from his hair,
And made a bow so dignifiedly flat,
That MAG was witched with his beauish air:
At last he spoke, with voice so soft, so kind,
So sweet, as if his throat with fiddle-strings was lin'd.

XXX.

"Lady! be not offended that I dare,
Thus forward and impertinently rude,
Emerge, uncall'd, into the upper air,
Intruding on a maiden's solitude;
Nay, do not be alarm'd, thou lady fair!
Why startle so?—I am a fairy good;
Not one of those that, envying beauteous maids,
Speckle their skins with moles, and fill with spleens their heads.

XXXI.

For, as conceal'd in this clay-house of mine,
I overheard thee in a lowly voice,
Weighing thy lovers' merits, with design
Now on the worthiest lad to fix thy choice,

* *Tangle-tassel'd*, hung round with tangle (sea-weed) as with tassels. I observe tangle in Bailey's Dictionary, though not in Johnson's.

I have up-bolted from my paltry shrine,
To give thee, sweet-eye'd lass, my best advice;
For, by the life of Oberon my king!
To pick good husband out is, sure, a ticklish thing.

XXXII.

And never shall good Tommy Puck permit
Such an assemblage of unwonted charms
To cool some lecher's lewd licentious fit,
And sleep imbounded by his boisterous arms:
What though his fields by twenty ploughs be split,
And golden wheat wave riches on his farms?
His house is shame—it cannot, shall not be;
A greater, happier doom, O Mag, awaiteth thee.

XXXIII.

Strange are indeed the steps by which thou must
Thy glory's happy eminence attain;
But fate hath fix'd them, and 'tis fate's t'adjust
The mighty links that ends to means enchain;
Nor may poor Puck his little fingers thrust
Into the links to break Jove's steel in twain;
Then, Maggie, hear, and let my words descend
Into thy soul, for much it boots thee to attend.

XXXIV.

To morrow, when o'er th' Isle of May the sun
Lifts up his forehead bright with golden crown,
Call to thine house the light-heel'd men, that run
Afar on messages for Anster Town,
Fellows of sp'rit, by none in speed out-done,
Of lofty voice, enough a drum to drown,
And bid them hie, post-haste, through all the nation,
And publish, far and near, this famous proclamation:

XXXV.

Let them proclaim, with voice's loudest tone,
That on your next approaching market-day,
Shall merry sports be held in Anster Loan,
With celebration notable and gay;
And that a prize, than gold or costly stone
More precious, shall the victor's toils repay,
Ev'n thy own form with beauties so replete—
Nay, Maggie, start not thus!—thy marriage-bed, my sweet.

XXXVI.

First, on the Loan shall ride full many an ass,
With stout whip-wielding rider on his back,
Intent with twinkling hoof to pelt the grass,
And pricking up his long ears at the crack;
Next o'er the ground the daring men shall pass,
Half-coffin'd in their cumbrances of sack,
With heads just peeping from their shrines of bag,
Horribly hobbling round, and straining hard for Mag.

XXXVII.

Then shall the pipers groaningly begin
In squeaking rivalry their merry strain,
Till Billyness shall echo back the din,
And Innergelly woods shall ring again;
Last, let each man that hopes thy hand to win
By witty product of prolific brain,
Approach, and, confident of Pallas' aid,
Claim by an hum'rous tale possession of thy bed.

XXXVIII.

Such are the wondrous tests by which, my love!
The merits of thy husband must be tried,
And he that shall in these superior prove
(One proper husband shall the Fates provide),
Shall from the Loan with thee triumphant move
Homeward, the jolly bridegroom and the bride,
And at thy house shall eat the marriage-feast,
When I'll pop up again." Here Tommy Puck surceast.

XXXIX.

He ceas'd, and to his wee mouth, dewy-wet,
His bagpipe's tube of silver up he held,
And underneath his down-press'd arm he set
His purple bag, that with a tempest swell'd;
He play'd and pip'd so sweet, that never yet
Mag had a piper heard that Puck excell'd;
Had Midas heard a tune so exquisite,
By Heav'n! his long base ears had quiver'd with delight.

XL.

Tingle the fire-ir'ns, poker, tongs, and grate,
Responsive to the blythesome melody!
The tables and the chairs inanimate
Wish they had muscles now to trip it high!
Wave back and forwards at a wondrous rate,
The window-curtains, touch'd with sympathy!
Fork, knife, and trencher, almost break their sloth,
And caper on their ends upon the table-cloth!

XLI.

How then could Maggie, sprightly, smart, and young,
Withstand that bagpipe's blythe awak'ning air?
She, as her ear-drum caught the sounds, up-sprung
Like lightning, and despis'd her idle chair,
And into all the dance's graces flung
The bounding members of her body fair;
From nook to nook through all her room she tript,
And whirl'd like whirligig, and reel'd, and bobb'd, and skipt.

XLII.

At last the little piper ceas'd to play,
And deftly bow'd, and said, "My dear, good night;"
Then in a smoke evanish'd clean away,
With all his gaudy apparatus bright;
As breaks soap-bubble, which a boy in play
Blows from his short tobacco-pipe aright,
So broke poor Puck from view, and on the spot
Y-smoking aloes-reek he left his mustard-pot.

XLIII.

Whereat the furious lady's wriggling feet
Forgot to patter in such pelting wise,
And down she gladly sunk upon her seat,
Fatigu'd and panting from her exercise;
She sat, and mus'd a while, as it was meet,
On what so late had occupied her eyes;
Then to her bed-room went, and doff'd her gown,
And laid upon her couch her charming person down.

XLIV.

Some say that Maggie slept so sound that night,
As never she had slept since she was born;
But sure am I, that, thoughtful of the sprite,
She twenty times upon her bed did turn;
For still appear'd to stand before her sight
The gaudy goblin, glorious from his urn,
And still within the cavern of her ear,
Th' injunction echoing rung, so strict and strange to hear.

XLV.

But when the silver-harness'd steeds, that draw
The car of morning up th' empyreal height,
Had snorted day upon North-Berwick Law,
And from their glist'ring loose manes toss'd the light,
Immediately from bed she rose (such awe
Of Tommy press'd her soul with anxious weight),
And donn'd her tissued fragrant morning vest,
And to fulfil his charge her earliest care addrest.

XLVI.

Straight to her house she tarried not to call
Her messengers and heralds swift of foot,
Men skill'd to hop o'er dykes and ditches; all
Gifted with sturdy brazen lungs to boot;
She bade them halt at every town, and bawl
Her proclamation out with mighty bruit,
Inviting loud, to Anster Loan and Fair,
The Scottish beau to jump for her sweet person there

XLVII.

They took each man his staff into his hand;
They button'd round their bellies close their coats;
They flew divided through the frozen land;
Were never seen such swiftly-trav'lling Scots!
Nor ford, slough, mountain, could their speed withstand;
Such fleetness have the men that feed on oats!
They skirr'd, they flounder'd thro' the sleets and snows,
And puff'd against the winds, that bit in spite each nose

XLVIII.

They halted at each wall-fenc'd town renown'd,
And ev'ry lesser borough of the nation;
And with the trumpet's welkin-rifting sound,
And tuck of drum of loud reverberation,

Tow'rds the four wings of heav'n, they, round and round,
Proclaim'd in Stentor-like vociferation,
That, on th' approaching day of ANSTER market,
Should merry sports be held:—Hush! listen now and hark it!—

XLIX.

"Ho! beaux and pipers, wits and jumpers, ho!
Ye buxom blades that like to kiss the lasses;
Ye that are skill'd sew'd up in sacks to go;
Ye that excel in *horsemanship* of asses;
Ye that are smart at telling tales, and know
On Rhyme's two stilts to crutch it up Parnassus;
Ho! lads, your sacks, pipes, asses, tales, prepare
To jump, play, ride, and rhyme, at ANSTER Loan and FAIR!

L.

First, on the green turf shall each ass draw nigh,
Caparison'd or clouted for the race,
With mounted rider, sedulous to ply
Cudgel or whip, and win the foremost place;
Next shall th' advent'rous men, that dare to try
Their bodies' springiness in hempen case,
Put on their bags, and, with ridic'lous bound,
And sweat and huge turmoil, pass lab'ring o'er the ground.

LI.

Then shall the pipers, gentlemen o' the drone,
Their pipes in gleesome competition screw,
And grace, with loud solemnity of groan,
Each his invented tune to th' audience new;
Last shall each witty bard, to whom is known
The craft of Helicon's rhyme-jingling crew,
His story tell in good poetic strains,
And make his learned tongue the midwife to his brains.

LII.

And he whose tongue the wittiest tale shall tell,
Whose bagpipe shall the sweetest tune resound,
Whose heels, tho' clogg'd with sack, shall jump it well,
Whose ass shall foot with fleetest hoof the ground,
He who from all the rest shall bear the bell,
With victory in every trial crown'd,
He (mark it, lads!) to MAGGIE LAUDER'S house
That self same night shall go, and take her for his spouse."

LIII.

Here ceas'd the criers of the sturdy lungs;
But here the gossip Fame (whose body's pores
Are naught but open ears and babbling tongues,
That gape and wriggle on her hide in scores)
Began to jabber o'er each city's throngs,
Blaz'ning the news through all the Scottish shores;
Nor had she blabb'd, methinks, so stoutly, since
Queen Dido's peace was broke by Troy's love-truant Prince.

LIV.

In every Lowland vale and Highland glen,
She nois'd th' approaching fun of ANSTER FAIR;
Ev'n when in sleep were laid the sons of men,
Snoring away on good chaff-beds their care,
You might have heard her faintly murm'ring then,
For lack of audience, to the midnight air,
That from Fife's East Nook up to farthest Stornoway,
Fair MAGGIE'S loud report most rapidly was borne away.

LV.

And soon the mortals, that design to strive
By meritorious jumping for the prize,
Train up their bodies, ere the day arrive,
To th' lumpish sack-encumber'd exercise;
You might have seen no less than four or five
Hobbling in each town-loan in awkward guise;
E'en little boys, when from the school let out,
Mimick'd the bigger beaux, and leap'd in pokes about.

LVI.

Through cots and granges with industrious foot,
By laird and knight were light-heel'd asses sought,
So that no ass of any great repute,
For twenty Scots marks could have then been bought;
Nor e'er, before or since, the long-ear'd brute
Was such a goodly acquisition thought.
The pipers vex'd their ears and pipes t'invent
Some tune that might the taste of ANSTER MAG content.

LVII.

Each poet, too, whose lore-manured brain
Is hot of soil, and sprouts up mushroom wit,
Ponder'd his noddle into extreme pain
T' excogitate some story nice and fit:
When rack'd had been his skull some hours in vain,
He, to relax his mind a little bit,
Plung'd deep into a sack his precious body,
And school'd it for the race, and hopp'd around his study.

LVIII.

Such was the sore preparatory care
Of all th' ambitious that for April sigh:
Nor sigh the young alone for ANSTER FAIR;
Old men and wives, erewhile content to die,
Who hardly can forsake their easy-chair,
To take, abroad, farewell of sun and sky,
With new desire of life now glowing, pray,
That they may just o'erlive our famous market-day.

CANTO II.

I.

LAST night I dream'd that to my dark bedside
Came, white with rays, the poet of the "Quhair,"*
And drew my curtain silently aside,
And stood and smil'd, majestically fair;
He to my finger then a ring applied
(It glitter'd like Aurora's yellow hair),
And gave his royal head a pleasant wag,
And said, "Go on, my boy, and celebrate thy MAG!"

II.

The sun, upcharioting from Capricorn,
Had 'tween the Ram's horns thrust his gilded nose;
And now his bright fist drops, each April morn,
O'er hill and dale, the daisy and the rose;
Wantons the lewd Earth with the god unshorn,
And from her womb the infant verdure throws,
Whilst he, good paramour! leaves Tithys' valley
Each morn by five o'clock, with her to sport and dally.

III.

Old Kelly-law, the kindly nurse of sheep,
Puts on her daisy-tissued gown of green;
On all her slopes so verdurous and steep,
The bleating children of the flock are seen;
While with a heart where mirth and pleasure keep
Their dwelling, and with honest brow serene,
The shepherd eyes his flock in mood of glee,
And wakes with oaten pipe the echoes of Carnbee.

IV.

And see how Airdrie woods upshoot on high
Their leafy living glories to the day,
As if they long'd t' embrace the vaulty sky
With their long branchy arms so green and gay!
Balcarras-craig, so rough, and hard, and dry,
Enliven'd into beauty by the ray,
Heaves up, bedeck'd with flow'rs, his ruffian-side,
Like giant hung with gawds, and boasts his tricksy pride.

V.

Ev'n on the King's-muir jigs the jolly Spring,
Scattering from whin to whin the new perfume;
While, near the sea-coast, Flora tarrying,
Touches the garden's parterres into bloom;
With joy the villages and cities ring;
Cowherd and cow rejoice, and horse and groom;
The ploughman laughs amid his joyous care;
And ANSTER burghers laugh in prospect of their Fair.

VI.

For lo! now peeping just above the vast
Vault of the German Sea, in east afar,
Appears full many a brig's and schooner's mast,
Their topsails strutting with the vernal harr;†
Near and more near they come, and show at last
Their ocean-thumping hulks all black with tar;
Their stems are pointed toward ANSTER pier,
While, flying o'er their sterns, the well-known flags appear.

* [James I. of Scotland.]

† The *harr* is the name given by the fishermen to that gentle breeze which generally blows from the east in a fine spring or summer afternoon.

The Late minister of Crossmichael, in Galloway, was one of those primative pastors, formerly numerous in Scotland who did not disdain to illustrate their subjects with such images and allusions as were within the comprehension of their homely hearers. Indeed, his sermons were very much the style of an easy conversation, interspersed with occassional parentheses, applicable to individual characters, or to the circumstances which arose before his eyes in the church, as a sleeping place for the aged and fat, or the ogling of the young and amorous, or any impropriety of a similarly venial nature. To give the reader an idea of this gentleman's manner in the pulpit, we may recount what he said one Sunday morning in reading a verse from the book of Exodus. "And the Lord said unto Moses—steek that door; I'm thinking, that if ye had to sit beside the door yoursel', ye wadna be sae ready leaving it open; it was just beside that door that Yedam Tamson, the bellman, gat his death o' cauld and I'm sure, honest man, he didna let it stay muckle open. And the Lord said unto Moses—put out that doug; wha is't that brings dougs to the kirk, yaf-yaffin? Let me never see ye bring your dougs here ony mair, or I'll put you and them baith oot. And the Lord said unto Moses—I see a man aneath the laft wi' his hat on; I'm sure ye'er clean oot o' the soogh o' the door; keep aff your bannet, Tammas; and, if your bare pow be cauld, ye maun just get a grey worset wig like mysel; they're no, sae dear; plenty o' them at Rob Gillespie's for tenpence." He again began the verse, and at last made out the instructions for Moses in a manner more strictly accordant with the text and with decency.

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VII.

From clear-skied France and muddy Zuyder-Zee,
They come, replenish'd with the stores of trade;
Some from the Hollander of lumpish knee
Convey his lintseed, stow'd in bag or cade;
Heav'n bless him! may his breeches countless be;
And warm and thick, and ever undecay'd!
For he it was that first supply'd the Scots
With linen for their sarks, and stout frieze for their coats.

VIII.

Some bring, in many an anker hooped strong,
From Flushing's port, the palate-biting gin,
Th' inspirer of the tavern's noisy song,
The top-delight, the nectar of each inn,
That sends a-bounding through the veins along
The loit'ring blood when frosty days begin,
The bev'rage wherein fiddlers like to nuzzle,
The gauger's joy to *seize*, and old wife's joy to guzzle!

IX.

Some from Garonne and bonny banks of Seine,
Transport in pipes the blood of Bacchus' berry,
Wherewith our lairds may fume the fuddl'd brain,
And grow, by bousing, boisterously merry;
And whereby, too, their cheeks a glow may gain,
Abashing ev'n the red of July's cherry;
Oh, it is right—our lairds do well, I ween;
A bottle of black wine is worth all Hippocrene!

X.

Soon, hurried forward by the skittish gales,
In Anster harbour every vessel moors;
Furl'd by the seamen are the flapping sails;
Fix'd are the halsers to the folk-clad shores;
Their holds discharge the wealth of Gallia's vales,
And Amsterdam's and Flushing's useful stores,
All to augment, with commerce' various ware,
The bustle and the trade of famous Anster Fair.

XI.

Nor distant now the day; the cream-fac'd sun,*
That, rising, shall engild to-morrow's air,
Shall shine with courteous beams upon the fun
And frolic of the celebrated Fair;
And now, already, have the folk begun
(So eager are they the delight to share),
In flocks to Maggie's borough to resort,
That they may all, betimes, be present at the sport.

XII.

Each hedge-lin'd highway of the king, that leads
Or straightly or obliquely to the Loan,
Seems, as the Muse looks downwards, pav'd with heads,
And hats and cowls of those that bustle on;
From Johnny Groat's House to the border-meads,
From isle of Arran to the mouth of Don,
In thousands puffingly to Fife they run,
Gold in their pockets lodg'd, and in their noddles fun.

XIII.

Say, Muse, who first, who last, on foot or steed,
Came candidates for Maggie to her town?
St Andrew's sprightly students first proceed,
Clad in their foppery of sleeveless gown;
Forth whistling from Salvador's gate they speed,
Full many a mettlesome and fiery loun,
Forgetting Horace for a while and Tully,
And mad t'embag their limbs and leap it beautifully.

XIV.

For ev'n in Learning's cobweb'd halls had rung
The loud report of Maggie Lauder's fame,
And Pedantry's Greek-conning sapient tongue
In songs had wagg'd in honour of her name;
Up from their mouldy books and tasks had sprung
Bigent and Magistrand to try the game;
Prelections ceas'd—old Alma Mater slept;
And o'er his silent rooms the ghost of Wardlaw wept.

XV.

So down in troops the red-clad students come
As kittens blythe, a joke-exchanging crew,
And in their heads bear learned Greece and Rome,
And haply Cyprus in their bodies too;
Some on their journey pipe and play; and some
Talk long of Mag, how fair she was to view,
And as they talk (ay me! so much the sadder!)
Backwards they scale the steps of honest Plato's ladder.*

XVI.

Others, their heels of weariness to cheat,
Repeated tales of classic merriment,
How the fool Faunus, on his noiseless feet,
At midnight to the cave of Tmolus went,
Scorch'd as he was with Venus' fiercest heat,
On cuckold-making mischievous intent,
Till from the horny fist of hairy Hercules,
He got upon the cheek a most confounded jerk, alas!

XVII.

Nor come they only down; in chaise or gig
Th' endoctrin'd sage professors lolling ride,
Their heads with curl'd vastidity of wig
Thatch'd round and round, and queerly beautified;
In silken hose is sheath'd each learned leg;
White are their cravats, long and trimly tied.
Some say they came to jump for Maggie too,
But college-records say they came the sport to view.

XVIII.

See, as their coach-wheels scour the Eastburn-lane,
Rattling as if the pavement up to tear,
How men and women, huddling in their train,
And hallooing shouts of loud applause appear!
Red-cheek'd and white-cheek'd, stout and feeble men,
With staff or staff-less, draw to Anster near;
And such a mob come trampling o'er King's-muir,
They raise a cloud of dust that does the sun obscure.

XIX.

Next from Deninos, every house and hut,
Her simple guileless people hie away;
That day the doors of parish-school were shut,
And every scholar got his leave to play:
Down rush they light of heart and light of foot,
Big ploughmen, in their coats of hodden grey,
Weavers despising now both web and treadle,
Collier and collier's wife, and minister and beadle.

XX.

Next, from the well-air'd ancient town of Crail,
Go out her craftsmen with tumultuous din,
Her wind-bleach'd fishers, sturdy-limb'd and hale,
Her in-knee'd tailors, garrulous and thin;
And some are flush'd with horns of pithy ale,
And some are fierce with drams of smuggl'd gin,
While, to augment his drowth, each to his jaws
A good Crail capon† holds, at which he rugs and gnaws.

XXI.

And from Kingsbarns and hamlet‡ clep'd of boars,
And farms around (their names too long to add),
Sally the villagers and hinds in scores,
Tenant and laird, and hedger, hodden-clad:
Bolted are all the East-nook houses' doors;
Ev'n toothless wives pass westward, strangely glad,
Propping their trem'lous limbs on oaken stay,
And in their red plaids drest as if 'twere Sabbath day

XXII.

And bare-foot lasses, on whose ruddy face
Unfurl'd is health's rejoicing banner seen,
Trick'd in their Sunday mutches edg'd with lace,
Tippets of white, and frocks of red and green,
Come tripping o'er the roads with jocund pace,
Gay as May-morning, tidy, gim, and clean,
Whilst, joggling at each wench's side, her joe
Cracks many a rustic joke, his pow'r of wit to show.

XXIII.

Then jostling forward on the western road,
Approach the folk of wind-swept Pittenweem,
So num'rous that the highways, long and broad,
One waving field of gowns and coat-tails seem;
The fat man puffing goes oppress'd with load
Of cumb'rous flesh and corpulence extreme;
The lean man bounds along, and with his toes
Smites on the fat man's heels, that slow before him goes.

* Anster Lintseed Market (as it is called) is on the 11th of April, or on one of the six days immediately succeeding.

* The student wishing to understand this ladder, may consult Plato. Conviv. tom. iii. page 211, of Serrani's edition.

† A *Crail capon* is a dried haddock.

‡ Boarhills.

XXIV.

St Monance, Elie, and adjacent farms,
Turn their mechanics, fishers, farmers out;
Sun-burnt and shoeless schoolboys rush in swarms,
With childish trick, and revelry and shout;
Mothers bear little children in their arms,
Attended by their giggling daughters stout;
Clowns, cobblers, cotters, tanners, weavers, beaux,
Hurry and hop along in clusters and in rows.

XXV.

And every husbandman, round Largo-law,
Hath scrap'd his huge-wheel'd dung-cart fair and clean,
Wherein on sacks stuff'd full of oaten straw,
Sit the goodwife, Tam, Katey, Jock, and Jean;
In flow'rs and ribbons drest the horses draw
Stoutly their creaking cumbersome machine,
As on his cart-head sits the goodman proud,
And cheerily cracks his whip and whistles clear and loud.

XXVI.

Then from her coal-pits Dysart vomits forth
Her subterranean men of colour dun,
Poor human mouldwarps! doom'd to scrape in earth—
Cimmerian people, strangers to the sun;
Gloomy as soot, with faces grim and swarth,
They march, most sourly leering every one,
Yet very keen, at Anster Loan, to share
The merriments and sports to be accomplish'd there.

XXVII.

Nor did Path-head detain her wrangling race
Of weavers, toiling at their looms for bread;
For now their slippery shuttles rest a space
From flying through their labyrinths of thread;
Their treadle-shaking feet now scour apace
Through Gallowtown with levity of tread;
So on they pass, with sack in hand, full bent
To try their sinews' strength in dire experiment.

XXVIII.

And long Kirkaldy, from each dirty street
Her num'rous population eastward throws;
Her roguish boys with bare unstocking'd feet,
Her rich ship-owners, gen'rous and jocose,
Her prosp'rous merchants, sober and discreet,
Her coxcombs pantaloon'd, and powder'd beaux;
Her pretty lasses tripping on their great toes,
With foreheads white as milk, or any boil'd potatoes.

XXIX.

And from Kinghorn jump hastily along
Her ferrymen and poor inhabitants:
And th' upland* hamlet, where, as told in song,
Tam Lutar play'd of yore his lively rants,
Is left dispeopled of her brose-fed throng,
For eastward scud they now as thick as ants:
Dunfermline, too, so famed for checks and ticks,
Sends out her loom-bred men, with bags and walking-sticks.

XXX.

And market-maids, and apron'd wives, that bring
Their gingerbread in baskets to the Fair;
And cadgers with their creels, that hang by string
From their lean horse-ribs, rubbing off the hair;
And crook-legg'd cripples, that on crutches swing
Their shabby persons with a noble air;
And fiddlers with their fiddles in their cases,
And packmen with their packs of ribbons, gauze, and laces.

XXXI.

And from Kinross, whose dusty streets unpaved
Are whirl'd through heav'n on summer's windy day,
Whose plats of cabbage-bearing ground are laved
By Leven's waves, that clear as crystal play,
Jog her brisk burghers, spruce and cleanly shaved,
Her sullen cutlers and her weavers gay,
Her ploughboys in their botch'd and clumsy jackets,
Her clowns with cobbl'd shoon stuck full of iron tackets.

XXXII.

Next ride on sleek-mane'd horses bay or brown,
Smacking their whips and spurring bloodily,
The writers of industrious Cupar town,
Good social mortals skill'd the pen to ply;

Lo! how their garments as they gallop down,
Waving behind them in the breezes fly;
As upward spurn'd to heav'n's blue bending roof,
Dash'd is the dusty road from every bounding hoof.

XXXIII.

And clerks with ruffled shirts and frizzled hairs,
Their tassel'd half-boots clear as looking-glass,
And Sheriffs learn'd, and unlearn'd Sheriff-mairs,
And messengers-at-arms, with brows of brass,
Come strutting down, or single or in pairs,
Some on high horse and some on lowly ass;
With blacksmiths, barbers, butchers, and their brats,
And some had new hats on, and some came wanting hats.

XXXIV.

Astraddle on their proud steeds full of fire,
From all the tree-girt country-seats around,
Comes many a huffy, many a kindly squire,
In showy garb, worth many a silver pound;
While close behind, in livery's base attire,
Follows poor lacquey with small-bellied hound,
Carrying, upon his shoulders slung, the bag
Wherein his master means to risk his neck for MAG.

XXXV.

From all her lanes and alleys, fair Dundee
Has sent her happy citizens away;
They come with mickle jolliment and glee,
Crossing in clumsy boat their shallow Tay;
Their heads are bonneted most fair to see,
And of the tartan is their back's array:
From Perth, Dunkeld, from Brechin, Forfar, Glams,
Roll down the sweaty crowds, with wearied legs and hams.

XXXVI.

And from the Mearnshire, and from Aberdeen,
Where knit by many a wench is many a stocking,
From Banff and Murray, where of old were seen
The witches by the chief so fain to grow king,
Descend in neckless coats brush'd smooth and clean,
And eke with long pipes in their mouths a-smoking,
The northern people, boisterous and rough,
Bearing both chin and nose bedaub'd with spilth of snuff.

XXXVII.

Comes next from Ross-shire and from Sutherland
The horny-knuckl'd kilted Highlandman:
From where upon the rocky Caithness strand
Breaks the long wave that at the Pole began,
And where Lochfine from her prolific sand
Her herrings gives to feed each bord'ring clan,
Arrive the brogue-shod men of gen'rous eye,
Plaided and breechless all, with Esau's hairy thigh.

XXXVIII.

They come not now to fire the Lowland stacks,
Or foray on the banks of Fortha's firth;
Claymore and broad-sword, and Lochaber-axe,
Are left to rust above the smoky hearth;
Their only arms are bagpipes now and sacks;
Their teeth are set most desp'rately for mirth;
And at their broad and sturdy backs are hung
Great wallets, cramm'd with cheese and bannocks and cold tongue.

XXXIX.

Nor staid away the Islanders, that lie
To buffet of th' Atlantic surge exposed;
From Jura, Arran, Barra, Uist, and Skye,
Piping they come, unshav'd, unbreech'd, unhos'd;
And from that Isle, whose abbey, structur'd high,
Within its precincts holds dead kings enclosed,
Where St Columba oft is seen to waddle
Gown'd round with flaming fire upon the spire astraddle.

XL.

Next from the far-fam'd ancient town of Ayr,
(Sweet Ayr! with crops of ruddy damsels blest,
That, shooting up, and waxing fat and fair,
Shine on thy braes the lilies of the west!)
And from Dumfries, and from Kilmarnock (where
Are night-caps made, the cheapest and the best)
Blythely they ride on ass and mule, with sacks
In lieu of saddles plac'd upon their asses' backs.

* Leslie

XLI.

Close at their heels, bestriding well-trapp'd nag,
Or humbly riding asses' backbone bare,
Come Glasgow's merchants, each with money-bag,
To purchase Dutch lintseed at ANSTER FAIR—
Sagacious fellows all, who well may brag
Of virtuous industry and talents rare;
Th' accomplish'd men o'the counting-room confest,
And fit to crack a joke or argue with the best.

XLII.

Nor keep their homes the Borderers, that stay
Where purls the Jed, and Esk, and little Liddel,
Men that can rarely on the bagpipe play,
And wake th' unsober spirit of the fiddle;
Avow'd freebooters, that have many a day
Stol'n sheep and cow, yet never own'd they did ill;
Great rogues, for sure that wight is but a rogue,
That blots the eighth command from Moses' decalogue.

XLIII.

And some of them in sloop of tarry side,
Come from North-Berwick harbour sailing out;
Others, abhorrent of the sick'ning tide,
Have ta'en the road by Stirling brig about,
And eastward now from long Kirkcaldy ride,
Slugging on their slow-gaited asses stout,
While, dangling, at their backs are bagpipes hung,
And, dangling, hangs a tale on ev'ry rhymer's tongue.

XLIV.

Amid them rides, on lofty ass sublime,
With cadger-like sobriety of canter,
In purple lustihood of youthful prime,
Great in his future glory, ROB THE RANTER
(I give the man what name in little time
He shall acquire from pipe and drone and chanter);
He comes apparell'd like a trim bridegroom,
Fiery and flush'd with hope, and like a god in bloom.

XLV.

No paltry vagrant piper-carle is he,
Whose base-brib'd drone whiffs out its wind for hire,
Who, having stroll'd all day for penny fee,
Couches at night with oxen in the byre;
ROB is a Border laird of good degree,
A many-acred, clever, jolly squire,
One born and shap'd to shine and make a figure,
And bless'd with supple limbs to jump with wondrous vigour.

XLVI.

His waggish face, that speaks a soul jocose,
Seems t'have been cast i'the mould of fun and glee,
And on the bridge of his well-arched nose
Sits Laughter plum'd, and white-wing'd Jollity;
His manly chest a breadth heroic shows;
Bold is his gesture, dignified and free;
Ev'n as he smites with lash his ass's hip,
'Tis with a seemly grace he whirls his glitt'ring whip.

XLVII.

His coat is of the flashy Lincoln green,
With silver buttons of the prettiest mould;
Each buttonhole and skirt and hem is seen
Sparkishly edg'd with lace of yellow gold;
His breeches of the velvet, smooth and clean,
Are very fair and goodly to behold;
So on he rides, and let him e'en ride on,
We shall again meet ROB to-morrow at the Loan.

XLVIII.

But mark his ass ere off he ride;—some say
He got him from a pilgrim lady fair,
Who, landing once on Joppa's wave-worn quay,
Had bought him of Armenian merchant there,
And prest his padded pack, and rode away
To snuff devotion in with Syria's air;
Then brought him home in hold of stout Levanter,*
All for the great good luck of honest ROB THE RANTER.

XLIX.

Along Fife's western roads, behold, how hie
The travel-sweltry crowds to ANSTER Loan,
Shaded, o'erhead, with clouds of dust that fly
Tarnishing heav'n with darkness not its own!

* Ship trading to and from the Levant, so called by seamen.

And scarcely can the Muse's lynx-sharp eye
Scan, through the dusty nuisance upward blown,
The ruddy plaids, black hats, and bonnets blue,
Of those that rush below, a motley-vestur'd crew!

L.

Nor only was the land with crowds opprest,
That trample forward to th' expected Fair;
The harass'd ocean had no peace or rest,
So many keels her foamy bosom tear;
For, into view, now sailing from the west,
With streamers idling in the bluish air,
Appear the painted pleasure-boats unleaky,
Charg'd with a precious freight—the good folks of Auld Reekie.

LI.

They come, the cream and flow'r of all the Scots,
The children of politeness, science, wit,
Exulting in their bench'd and gaudy boats,
Wherein some joking and some puking sit;
Proudly the pageantry of carvels floats,
As if the salt sea frisk'd to carry it;
The gales vie emulous their sails to wag,
And dally as in love with each long gilded flag.

LII.

Upon the benches seated, I descry
Her gentry; knights, and lairds, and long-nail'd fops;
Her advocates and signet-writers sly;
Her gen'rous merchants, faithful to their shops;
Her lean-cheek'd tetchy critics, who, Oh fy!
Hard-retching, spue upon the sails and ropes;
Her lovely ladies, with their lips like rubies;
Her fiddlers, fuddlers, fools, bards, blockheads, blackguards, boobies.

LIII.

And red-prow'd fisher-boats afar are spied
In south-east, tilting o'er the jasper main,
Whose wing-like oars, dispread on either side,
Now swoop on sea, now rise in sky again:
They come not now, with herring-nets supplied,
Or barbed lines to twitch the haddock train,
But with the townsfolk of Dunbar are laden,
Who burn to see the Fair—man, stripling, wife and maiden.

LIV.

And many a Dane, with ringlets long and red,
And many a starv'd Norwegian, lank and brown
(For over seas the fame of MAG had spread
Afar from Scandinavian town to town),
Maugre the risk of drowning, and the dread
Of *krakens*, isles of fish of droll renown,
Have dar'd to cross the ocean, and now steer
Their long outlandish skiffs direct on ANSTER pier.

LV.

Forward they scud; and soon each pleasure-barge,
And fisher-boats, and skiffs so slim and lax,
On shore their various passengers discharge,
Some hungry, queasy some and white as flax;
Lightly they bound upon the beach's verge,
Glad to unbend their stiffen'd houghs and backs:
But who is that, Oh Muse, with lofty brow,
That from his lacker'd boat is just forth-stepping now?

LVI.

Thou fool! (for I have ne'er since Bavius' days
Had such a dolt to dictate to as thou),
Dost thou not know by that eye's kingly rays,
And by the arch of that celestial brow,
And by the grace his ev'ry step displays,
And by the crowds that round him duck and bow,
That that is good King James, the merriest Monarch
That ever sceptre sway'd since Noah steer'd his own ark?

LVII.

For, as he in his house of Holyrood
Of late was keeping jovially his court,
The gipsey Fame beside his window stood,
And hollow'd in his ear fair MAG's report:
The Monarch laugh'd, for to his gamesome mood
Accorded well th' anticipated sport;
So here he comes with lord and lady near,
Stepping with regal stride up ANSTER's eastern pier.

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LVIII.

But mark you, boy, how in a loyal ring
(As does obedient subjects well become)
Fife's hospitable lairds salute their King,
And kiss his little finger or his thumb;
That done, their liege lord they escorting bring
To ANSTER House,* that he may eat a crumb;
Where in the stucco'd hall they sit and dine,
And into tenfold joy bedrench their blood with wine.

LIX.

Some with the ladies in the chambers ply
Their bounding elasticity of heel,
Evolving, as they trip it whirlingly,
The merry mazes of th' entangl'd reel;
'Tween roof and floor, they fling, they flirt, they fly,
Their garments swimming round them as they wheel;
The rafters creak beneath the dance's clatter;
Tremble the solid walls with feet that shake and patter.

LX.

Some (wiser they) resolv'd on drinking-bout,
The wines of good Sir John englut amain;
Their glasses soon are fill'd, and soon drunk out,
And soon are bumper'd to the brim again:
Certes that laird is but a foolish lout,
Who does not fuddle now with might and main;
For gen'rous is their host, and, by my sooth,
Was never better wine applied to Scottish mouth.

LXI.

With might and main they fuddle and carouse;
Each glass augments their thirst, and keens their wit;
They swill, they swig, they take a hearty rouse,
Cheering their flesh with Bacchus' benefit,
Till, by and bye, the windows of the house
Go dizzily whirling round them where they sit;
And had you seen the sport, and heard the laughing,
You'd thought that all Jove's gods in ANSTER House sat quaffing.

LXII.

Not such a wassail, fam'd for social glee,
In Shushan's gardens long ago was held,
When Ahasuerus, by a blythe decree,
His turban'd satraps to the house compell'd,
And bagg'd their Persian paunches with a sea
Of wine, that from his carved gold they swill'd,
Whilst overhead was stretch'd (a gorgeous show!)
Blue blankets, silver-starr'd—a heav'n of calico!

LXIII.

Nor less is the disport and joy without,
In ANSTER town and Loan, through all the throng:
'Tis but one vast tumultuous jovial rout,
Tumult of laughing, and of gabbling strong;
Thousands and tens of thousands reel about,
With joyous uproar blustering along;
Elbows push boringly on sides with pain,
Wives hustling come on wives, and men dash hard on men.

LXIV.

There lacks no sport: tumblers in wondrous pranks,
High-stag'd, display their limbs' agility;
And now they, mountant from the scaffold's planks,
Kick with their whirling heels the clouds on high,
And now, like cat, upon their dextrous shanks,
They light, and of new monsters cheat the sky;
Whilst motley Merry-Andrew, with his jokes,
Wide through the incorp'rate mob the bursting laugh provokes.

LXV.

Others upon the green, in open air,
Enact the best of Davie Lindsay's plays;
While ballad-singing women do not spare
Their throats, to give good utt'rance to their lays;
And many a leather-lung'd co-chanting pair
Of wood-legg'd sailors, children's laugh and gaze,
Lift to the courts of Jove their voices loud,
Y-hymning their mishaps, to please the heedless crowd.

* Anster House was destroyed to its foundation in 1811.

LXVI.

Meanwhile the sun, fatigued (as well he may)
With shining on a night till seven o'clock,
Beams on each chimney-head a farewell ray,
Illuming into golden shaft its smoke;
And now in sea, far west from Oronsay,
Is dipp'd his chariot-wheel's refulgent spoke,
And now a section of his face appears,
And, diving, now he ducks clean down o'er head and ears.

LXVII.

Anon uprises, with blythe bagpipe's sound,
And shriller din of flying fiddlestick,
On the green loan and meadow-crofts around,
A town of tents, with blankets roofed quick:
A thousand stakes are rooted in the ground;
A thousand hammers clank and clatter thick;
A thousand fiddles squeak and squeal it yare;
A thousand stormy drones out-gasp in groans their air.

LXVIII.

And such a turbulence of gen'ral mirth
Rises from ANSTER Loan upon the sky,
That from his throne Jove starts, and down on earth
Looks, wond'ring what may be the jollity:
He roots his eye on shores of Forthan Firth,
And smerks, as knowing well the market nigh,
And bids his gods and goddesses look down,
To mark the rage of joy that maddens ANSTER town.

LXIX.

From Cellardyke to wind-swept Pittenweem,
And from Balhouffie to Kilrennymill,
Vaulted with blankets, crofts and meadows seem,
So many tents the grassy spaces fill;
Meantime the Moon, yet leaning on the stream,
With fluid silver bathes the welkin chill,
That now earth's half-ball, on the side of night,
Swims in an argent sea of beautiful moonlight.

LXX.

Then to his bed full many a man retires,
On plume, or chaff, or straw, to get a nap,
In houses, tents, in haylofts, stables, byres,
And or without, or with, a warm night-cap:
Yet sleep not all; for by the social fires
Sit many, cuddling round their toddy-sap,
And ever and anon they eat a lunch,
And rinse the mouthfuls down with flav'rous whisky punch.

LXXI.

Some, shuffling paper nothings, keenly read
The Devil's maxims in his painted books,
Till the old serpent in each heart and head
Spits canker, and with wormwood sours their looks:
Some o'er the chess-board's chequer'd champaign lead
Their inch-tall bishops, kings, and queens, and rooks;
Some force, t' enclose the Tod, the wooden Lamb on;
Some shake the pelting dice upon the broad backgammon.

LXXII.

Others, of travell'd elegance polite,
With mingling music MAGGIE'S house surround,
And serenade her all the live-long night
With song and lyre, and flutes' enchanting sound,
Chiming and hymning into fond delight
The heavy night air that o'ershades the ground;
While she, right pensive, in her chamber-nook
Sits pond'ring on th' advice of little Tommy Puck.

CANTO III.

I.

I WISH I had a cottage snug and neat
Upon the top of many-fountain'd Ide,
That I might thence in holy fervour greet
The bright-gown'd Morning tripping up her side:
And when the low Sun's glory-buskin'd feet
Walk on the blue wave of th' Ægean tide,
Oh I would kneel me down, and worship there
The God who garnish'd out a world so bright and fair!

II.

The saffron-elbow'd Morning up the slope
Of heav'n canaries in her jewell'd shoes,
And throws o'er Kelly-law's sheep-nibbled top
Her golden apron dripping kindly dews;
And never, since she first began to hop
Up heav'n's blue causeway, of her beams profuse,
Shone there a dawn so glorious and so gay,
As shines the merry dawn of ANSTER Market-day.

III.

Round through the vast circumference of sky
One speck of small cloud cannot eye behold,
Save in the East some fleeces bright of dye,
That stripe the hem of heav'n with woolly gold,
Whereon are happy angels wont to lie
Lolling, in amaranthine flow'rs enroll'd,
That they may spy the precious light of God,
Flung from the blessed East o'er the fair Earth abroad.

IV.

The fair Earth laughs through all her boundless range,
Heaving her green hills high to greet the beam;
City and village, steeple, cot, and grange,
Gilt as with Nature's purest leaf-gold seem;
The heaths and upland muirs, and fallows, change
Their barren brown into a ruddy gleam,
And, on ten thousand dew-bent leaves and sprays,
Twinkle ten thousand suns, and fling their petty rays.

V.

Up from their nests and fields of tender corn
Full merrily the little sky-larks spring,
And on their dew-bedabbled pinions borne,
Mount to the heav'n's blue key-stone flickering;
They turn their plume-soft bosoms to the morn,
And hail the genial light, and cheer'ly sing;
Echo the gladsome hills and vallies round,
As half the bells of Fife ring loud and swell the sound.

VI.

For when the first up-sloping ray was flung
On ANSTER steeple's swallow-harb'ring top,
Its bell and all the bells around were rung
Sonorous, jangling loud without a stop;
For toilingly each bitter beadle swung,
Ev'n till he smok'd with sweat, his greasy rope,
And almost broke his bell-wheel, ush'ring in
The morn of ANSTER FAIR, with tinkle-tankling din.

VII.

And, from our steeple's pinnacle outspread,
The town's long colours flare and flap on high,
Whose anchor, blazon'd fair in green and red,
Curls, pliant to each breeze that whistles by;
Whilst on the boltsprit stern and topmast-head
Of brig and sloop that in the harbour lie,
Streams the red gaudery of flags in air,
All to salute and grace the morn of ANSTER FAIR.

VIII.

Forthwith from house and cellar, tent and byre,
Rous'd by the clink of bells that jingle on,
Uncabin'd, rush the multitude like fire,
Furious and squeezing forward to the Loan;*
The son, impatient, leaves his snail-slow sire;
The daughter leaves her mam to trot alone;
So madly leap they, man, wife, girl, and boy,
As if the senseless Earth they kick'd for very joy.

IX.

And such the noise of feet that trampling pass,
And tongues that roar and rap from jaw to jaw,
As if ten thousand chariots, wheel'd with brass,
Came hurling down the sides of Largo-law;
And such the number of the people was,
As when in day of Autumn, chill and raw,
His small clouds Eurus sends, a vap'ry train,
Streaming in scatter'd rack, exhaustless, from the main.

* Anster Loan must, in those days, have been of great extent; at present its limits are contracted almost to the breadth of the highway.

X.

For who like arrant slugs can keep their heads
In contact with their pillows now unstirr'd?
Grandfathers leave their all-year-rumpl'd beds,
With moth-eat breeches now their loins to gird,
And, drawn abroad on tumbrils and on sleds
Chat off their years, and sing like vernal bird;
Men, whom cold agues into leanness freeze,
Imblanketed walk out, and snuff the kindly breeze.

XI.

And flea-bit wives, on whose old arms and cheeks
The spoiler Time hath driv'n his furrowing plough,
Whose cold dry bones have all the winter weeks
Hung shiv'ring o'er their chimney's peat-fed glow,
Now warm and flexible, and lithe as leeks,
Wabbingly walk to see the joyous show;
What wonder? when each brick and pavement stone
Wish'd it had feet that day to walk to ANSTER Loan!

XII.

Upon a little dappled nag, whose mane
Seem'd to have robb'd the steeds of Phaeton,
Whose bit, and pad, and fairly-fashion'd rein,
With silvery adornments richly shone,
Came MAGGIE LAUDER forth, enwheel'd with train
Of knights and lairds around her trotting on:
At James' right hand she rode, a beauteous bride,
That well deserv'd to go by haughtiest Monarch's side.

XIII.

Her form was as the Morning's blythesome star,
That, capp'd with lustrous coronet of beams,
Rides up the dawning orient in her car,
New-wash'd, and doubly fulgent from the streams—
The Chaldee shepherd eyes her light afar,
And on his knees adores her as she gleams;
So shone the stately form of MAGGIE LAUDER,
And so th' admiring crowds pay homage and applaud her.

XIV.

Each little step her trampling palfrey took
Shak'd her majestic person into grace,
And, as at times, his glossy sides she strook
Endearingly with whip's green silken lace,
(The prancer seem'd to court such kind rebuke,
Loitering with wilful tardiness of pace);
By Jove, the very waving of her arm
Had pow'r a brutish lout t' unbrutify and charm!

XV.

Her face was as the summer cloud, whereon
The dawning sun delights to rest his rays!
Compar'd with it, old Sharon's vale, o'ergrown
With flaunting roses, had resign'd its praise;
For why? Her face with heav'n's own roses shone,
Mocking the morn, and witching men to gaze;
And he that gaz'd with cold unsmitten soul,
That blockhead's heart was ice thrice bak'd beneath the Pole.

XVI.

Her locks, apparent tufts of wiry gold,
Lay on her lily temples, fairly dangling,
And on each hair, so harmless to behold,
A lover's soul hung mercilessly strangling;
The piping silly zephyrs vied t' unfold
The tresses in their arms so slim and tangling,
And thrid in sport these lover-noosing snares,
And play'd at hide-and-seek amid the golden hairs.

XVII.

Her eye was as an honour'd palace, where
A choir of lightsome Graces frisk and dance;
What object drew her gaze, how mean soe'er,
Got dignity and honour from the glance;
Woe to the man on whom she unaware
Did the dear witch'ry of her eye elance!
'Twas such a thrilling, killing, keen regard—
May Heav'n from such a look preserve each tender bard!

XVIII.

Beneath its shading tucker heav'd a breast
Fashion'd to take with ravishment mankind;
For never did the flimsy Coan vest
Hide such a bosom in its gauze of wind;

Ev'n a pure angel, looking, had confest
A sinless transport passing o'er his mind;
For, in the nicest turning-loom of Jove,
Turn'd were these charming hills, t' inspire a holy love.

XIX.

So on she rode in virgin majesty,
Charming the thin dead air to kiss her lips,
And with the light and grandeur of her eye
Shaming the proud sun into dim eclipse;
While round her presence clust'ring far and nigh,
On horseback some, with silver spurs and whips,
And some afoot with shoes of dazzling buckles,
Attended knights, and lairds, and clowns with horny knuckles.

XX.

Not with such crowd surrounded, nor so fair
In form, rode forth Semiramis of old,
On chariot where she sat in iv'ry chair
Beneath a sky of carbuncle and gold,
When to Euphrates' banks to take the air,
Or her new rising brickwalls to behold,
Abroad she drove, whilst round her wheels were pour'd
Satrap, and turban'd squire, and pursy Chaldee lord.

XXI.

Soon to the Loan came Mag, and from her pad
Dismounting with a queen-like dignity
(So from his buoyant cloud, man's heart to glad,
Lights a bright angel on a hill-top high),
On a small mound, with turfy greenness clad,
She lit, and walk'd enchantment on the eye;
Then on two chairs, that on its top stood ready,
Down sat the good King James, and Anster's bonny lady.

XXII.

Their chairs were finely carv'd, and overlaid
With the thin lustre of adorning gold,
And o'er their heads a canopy was spread
Of arras, flower'd with figures manifold,
Supported by four boys, of silver made,
Whose glitt'ring hands the vault of cloth uphold;
On each side sat or stood, to view the sport,
Stout lord and lady fair, the flow'r of Scotland's court.

XXIII.

On their gilt chairs they scarce had time to sit,
When uprose, sudden, from th' applauding mob,
A shout enough to startle hell, and split
The roundness of the granite-ribbed globe;
The mews of May's steep islet, terror-smit,
Clang'd correspondent in a shrill hubbub,
And had the moon then hung above the main,
Crack'd had that horrid shout her spotted orb in twain.

XXIV.

Thrice did their shouting make a little pause,
That so their lungs might draw recruiting air,
Thrice did the stormy tumult of applause
Shake the Fife woods, and fright the foxes there;
Sky rattled, and Kilbrachmont's crows and daws,
Alarm'd, sung hoarsely o'er their callow care:
Oh never, sure, in Fife's town-girdled shire,
Was heard, before or since, a shout so loud and dire!

XXV.

Nor ceas'd th' acclaim when ceas'd the sound of voice,
For fiddlesticks, in myriads, bick'ring fast,
Shreik'd on their shrunken guts a shrilling noise;
And pipe, and drone, with whistle, and with blast,
Consorted, humm'd and squeak'd, and swell'd the joys
With furious harmony too high to last;
And such a hum of pipe and drone was there,*
As if on earth men pip'd, and devils dron'd in air.

XXVI.

Thus did the crowd with fiddle, lungs, and drone,
Congratulate fair Maggie and their King,
Till at the last, wide-spreading round the Loan,
They form'd of huge circumference a ring,
Enclosing green space, bare of bush and stone,
Where might the asses run and suitors spring;
Upon its southmost end, high chair'd, were seen
The Monarch and the dame, and overlook'd the green.

XXVII.

Anon, the King's stout trumpet blew aloud,
Silence imposing on the rabble's roar;
Silent as summer sky stood all the crowd—
Each bag was strangl'd and could snort no more
(So sinks the roaring of the foamy flood,
When Neptune's clarion twangs from shore to shore).
Then through his trump he bawl'd with such a stress,
One might have known his words a mile beyond Crawness.

XXVIII.

"Ho! hark ye, merry mortals! hark ye, ho!
The King now speaks, nor what he speaks is vain;
This day's amount of bus'ness well ye know,
So what you know I will not tell again:
He hopes your asses are more swift than doe;
He hopes your sacks are strong as iron chain;
He hopes your bags and pipes are swoln and screw'd;
He hopes your rhyme-cramm'd brains are in a famous mood.

XXIX.

For, verily, in Anster's beauteous dame
Awaits the victor no despis'd reward;
Sith well she merits that the starry frame
Should drop Apollo on that grassy sward,
That so he might, by clever jumping, claim
A fairer Daphne than whom once he marr'd;
So fair is Mag: yet not her charms alone,
A present from the King shall be the victor's own.

XXX.

For as a dow'r, along with Maggie's hand,
The monarch shall the conqueror present
With ten score acres of the royal land,
All good of soil, and of the highest rent;
Near where Dunfermline's palace-turrets stand,
They stretch, array'd in wheat, their green extent:
With such a gift the King shall crown to-day
The gen'rous toils of him who bears the prize away.

XXXI.

And he, prize-blest, shall enter Maggie's door,
Who shall in all the trials victor be;
Or, if there hap no victor in the four,
He who shall shine and conquer in the three;
But, should sly fortune give to two or more,
An equal chance in equal victory,
'Tis Mag's of these to choose the dearest beau:—
So bring your asses in, bring in your asses, ho!"

XXXII.

Scarce from his clam'rous brass the words were blown,
When from the globe of people issued out
Donkies in dozens, and in scores, that shone
In purple some, and some in plainer clout,
With many a wag astraddle plac'd thereon,
Green-coated knight, and laird, and clumsy lout,
That one and all came burning with ambition,
To try their asses' speed in awkward competition.

XXXIII.

And some sat wielding silver-headed whips,
Whisking their asses' ears with silken thong;
Some thrash'd and thwack'd their sturdy hairy hips,
With knotted cudgels ponderous and strong;
And some had spurs, whose every rowel dips
Amid their ribs an inch of iron long;
And some had bridles gay and bits of gold,
And some had hempen reins most shabby to behold.

XXXIV.

Amid them entered, on the listed space,
Great Rob (the Ranter was his after name),
With Fun's broad ensign hoisted in his face,
And aug'ring to himself immortal fame;
And aye, upon the hillock's loftier place,
Where sat his destin'd spouse, the blooming dame,
A glance he flung, regardless of the reins,
And felt the rapid love glide tingling through his veins.

* Such a yell was there,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air.—Scott's *Marmion*.

XXXV.

She, too, upon the Bord'rer's manly size
With prepossessing favour fix'd her sight;
For woman's sharp and well-observing eyes
Soon single out the seemliest, stateliest wight;
And, oh! (she to herself thus silent sighs)
Were't but the will of Puck the dapper sprite,
I could—La! what a grace of form divine!—
I could, in sooth, submit to lose my name in thine!

XXXVI.

Forward they rode, to where the King and Mag
O'erlook'd, superior, from the southern mound,
When from his brute alighting every wag,
His person hunch'd into a bow profound,
And almost kiss'd his shoes' bedusted tag,
Grazing with nose most loyally the ground,
As earthward crook'd they their corporeal frames
Into obeisance due, before the gracious James.

XXXVII.

"Rise, rise, my lads," the jovial monarch said,
"Here is not now the fitting place to ply
The courtier's and the dancing-master's trade,
Nuzzling the nasty ground obsequiously;
Up, up—put hat and bonnet upon head—
The chilling dew still drizzles from the sky;
Up—tuck your coats succinct around your bellies;
Mount, mount your asses' backs like clever vaulting fellows.

XXXVIII.

And see, that, when the race's sign is giv'n,
Each rider whirl his whip with swingeing might,
Or toss his whizzing cudgel up to heav'n,
That with more goodly bang it down may light;
And let the spur's blood-thirsty teeth be driv'n
Through hide and hair by either heel aright,
For 'tis a beast most sluggish, sour, and slow;
Be mounting then, my hearts, and range ye in a row.

XXXIX.

And look ye northwards—note yon mastlike pole
Tassel'd with ribbons and betrimm'd with clout,
Yon—mark it—is the race-ground's northern goal,
Where you must turn your asses' heads about,
And jerk them southward, till with gladsome soul
You reach that spot whence now you're setting out;
And he that reaches first, shall loud be shouted
The happy, happy man—I'll say no more about it."

XL.

This said, they like the glimpse of lightning quick,
Upvaulted on their backbones asinine,
And marshal'd, by the force of spur and stick,
The long-ear'd lubbards in an even line:
Then sat, awaiting that momentous nick
When James's herald should y-twang the sign:
Each whip was rear'd aloft in act to crack,
Each cudgel hung in sky surcharged with stormy thwack.

XLI.

Frisk'd with impatient flutter every heart
As the brisk anxious blood began to jump;
Each human ear prick'd up it fleshiest part,
To catch the earliest notice of the trump;
When hark! with blast that spoke the sign to start,
The brass-toned clarion gave the air a thump,
Whoop—off they go; halloo—they shoot—they fly!
They spur—they whip—they crack—they bawl—they curse—they cry!

XLII.

A hundred whips, high-toss'd in ether, sung
Tempestuous, flirting up and down like fire;
'Tween sky and earth as many cudgels swung
Their gnarl'd lengths in formidable gyre,
And, hissing, from their farther ends down flung
A storm of wooden bangs and anguish dire;
Woe to the beastly ribs, and skulls, and backs,
Foredoom'd to bear the weight of such unwieldy cracks!

XLIII.

Woe to the beastly bowels, doom'd, alas!
To bear the spur's sharp steely agony;
For through the sore-gall'd hides of every ass
Squirts the vext blood in gush of scarlet dye,
While as they slug along the hoof-crush'd grass,
Rises a bray so horrid and so high,
As if all Bashan's bulls, with fat o'ergrown,
Had bellow'd on the green of Anster's frighted Loan.

XLIV.

Who can in silly pithless words paint well
The pithy feats of that laborious race?
Who can the cudgellings and whippings tell,
The hurry, emulation, joy, disgrace?
'Twould take for tongue the clapper of a bell,
To speak the total wonders of the chace;
'Twould need a set of sturdy brassy lungs,
To tell the mangled whips, and shatter'd sticks and rungs.

XLV.

Each rider pushes on to be the first,
Nor has he now an eye to look behind;
One ass trots smartly on, though like to burst
With bounding blood, and scantiness of wind;
Another, by his master bann'd and cursed,
Goes backward through perversity of mind,
Inching along in motion retrograde,
Contrarious to the course which Scotland's Monarch bade.

XLVI.

A third obdurate stands and cudgel-proof,
And steadfast as th' unchisel'd rock of flint,
Regardless though the heaven's high marble roof
Should fall upon his skull with mortal dint,
Or though conspiring earth, beneath his hoof,
Should sprout up coal with fiery flashes in't,
Whilst on his back his griev'd and waspish master,
The stubborner he stands, still bangs and bans the faster.

XLVII.

Meantime, the rabblement, with fav'ring shout,
And clapping hand, set up so loud a din,
As almost with stark terror frighted out
Each ass's soul from his partic'lar skin;
Rattled the bursts of laughter round about,
Grinn'd every phiz with mirth's peculiar grin,
As through the Loan they saw the cuddies awkward
Bustling some straight, some thwart, some forward, and some backward.

XLVIII.

As when the clouds, by gusty whirlwind riv'n,
And whipp'd into confusion pitchy-black,
Detach'd, fly diverse round the cope of heav'n,
Reeling and jostling in uncertain rack,
And some are northward, some are southward driv'n,
With storm embroiling all the zodiac,
Till the clash'd clouds send out the fiery flash,
And peals, with awful roll, the long loud thunder crash.

XLIX.

Just in such foul confusion and alarm
Jostle the cuddies with rebellious mind,
All drench'd with sweat, internally so warm,
They loudly bray before, and belch behind:
But who is yon, the foremost of the swarm,
That scampers fleetly as the rain-raw wind?
'Tis Robert Scott, if I can trust my eyne;
I know the Bord'rer well, by his long coat of green!

L.

See how his bright whip brandish'd round his head,
Flickers like streamer in the northern skies!
See how his ass on earth with nimble tread
Half-flying rides, in air half-riding flies,
As if a pair of ostrich wings, out-spread,
To help him on, had sprouted from his thighs!
Well scamper'd Rob, well whipt, well spurr'd, my boy!
O haste ye, Ranter, haste—rush—gallop to thy joy!

LI.

The pole is gain'd; his ass's head he turns
Southward, to tread the trodden ground again;
Sparkles like flint the cuddy's hoof and burns,
Seeming to leave a smoke upon the plain;
His bitted mouth the foam impatient churns;
Sweeps his broad tail behind him like a train;
Speed, cuddy, speed—Oh, slacken not thy pace!
Ten minutes more like this, and thou shalt gain the race!

LII.

He comes carcering on the sounding Loan,
With pace unslacken'd hast'ning to the knoll,
And as he meets with those that hobble on
With northward heads to gain the ribbon'd pole,
Ev'n by his forceful fury are o'erthrown
His long-ear'd brethren in confusion droll;
For as their sides, he passing, slightly grazes,
By that collision shock'd, down roll the founder'd asses.

LIII.

Heels over head they tumble; ass on ass
They dash, and twenty times roll o'er and o'er,
Lubberly wallowing along the grass,
In beastly ruin and with beastly roar;
While their vexed riders in poor plight, alas!
Flung from their saddles three long ells and more,
Bruis'd and commingl'd, with their cuddies sprawl,
Cursing th' impetuous brute whose conflict caus'd their fall.

LIV.

With hats upon their heads they down did light,
Withouten hats disgracefully they rose;
Clean were their faces ere they fell and bright,
But dirty-fac'd they got up on their toes;
Strong were their sinews ere they fell and tight,
Hip-shot they stood up, sprain'd with many woes;
Blythe were their aspects ere the ground they took,
Grim louring rose they up, with crabbed ghastful look.

LV.

And, to augment their sorrow and their shame,
A hail abhorr'd of nauseous rotten eggs,
In rascal vollies from the rabble came
Opprobrious, on their bellies, heads, and legs,
Smearing with slime that ill their clothes became,
Whereby they stunk like wash-polluted pigs,
For in each sputt'ring shell a juice was found,
Foul as the dribbling pus of Philoctetes' wound.

LVI.

Ah! then with grievous limp along the ground,
They sought their hats that had so flown away,
And some were, cuff'd and much disaster'd, found,
And haply some not found unto this day:
Meanwhile, with vast and undiminish'd bound,
Sheer through the bestial wreck and disarray,
The brute of Mesopotam hurries on,
And in his madding speed devours the trembling Loan.

LVII.

Speed, cuddy, speed—one short, short minute more,
And finish'd is thy toil, and won the race!
Now, one half minute and thy toils are o'er—
His toils are o'er, and he has gain'd the base!
He shakes his tail, the conscious conqueror;
Joy peeps through his stupidity of face;
He seems to wait the Monarch's approbation,
As quiver his long ears with self-congratulation.

LVIII.

Straight from the stirrup Rob dislodg'd his feet,
And, flinging from his grasp away the rein,
Off sprung, and louting in obeisance meet,
Did lowly duty to his King again:
His King with salutation kind did greet
Him the victorious champion of the plain,
And bade him rise, and up the hillock skip,
That he the royal hand might kiss with favour'd lip.

LIX.

Whereat, obedient to the high command,
Great Robert Scott, upbolting from the ground,
Rush'd up, in majesty of gesture grand,
To where the Monarch sat upon the mound,
And kiss'd the hard back of his hairy hand,
Respectfully, as fits a Monarch crown'd;
But with a keener ecstacy he kiss'd
The dearer tend'rer back of Maggie's downy fist.

LX.

Then took the trumpeter his clarion good,
And, in a sharp and violent exclaim,
Out from the brass among the multitude,
Afar sent conqu'ring Rob's illustrious name;
Which heard, an outcry of applause ensued,
That shook the dank dew from the starry frame;
Great Robert's name was halloo'd through the mob,
And Echo blabb'd to heav'n the name of mighty Rob.

LXI.

But, unapplauded, and in piteous case,
The laggers on their vanquish'd asses slow,
Shame-stung, with scurvy length of rueful face,
Ride sneaking off to save them further woe;
For, cramm'd with slime and stench and vile disgrace,
Th' abominable shells fly moe and moe,
Till slink the men amid the press of folk,
Secure from shame, and slime, and egg's unwholesome yolk.

CANTO IV.

I.

There are who say (the devil pinch them for it!)
That I am but a silly poetaster,
A trencher-licker in Apollo's court,
A sorry boy, an arrant paper-waster;
The louts! I'll make them mend their bad report,
Or on their mouths will clap a pitchy plaster;
Ye blockheads, read my ass-race, and avow it,
That I'm Homeric stuff—ay, every inch a poet.

II.

Again, the herald at the King's desire,
His tube of metal to his mouth applied,
And, with a roysting brazen clangour dire,
Round to the heaving mass of rabble cried,
Inviting every blade of fun and fire,
That wish'd to jump in hempen bondage tied,
Forthwith to start forth from the people's ring,
And fetch his sack in hand, and stand before the King.

III.

No sooner in the sky his words were blown,
Than through the multitude's compacted press,
Wedging their bodies, push to th' open Loan
Th' audacious men of boasted springiness;
Some Sampson-thigh'd, and large and big of bone,
Brawn-burden'd, six feet high or little less,
Some lean, flesh-wither'd, stinted, oatmeal things,
Yet hardy, tough, and smart, with heels like steely springs.

IV.

Nor were the offer'd candidates a few;
In hundreds forth they issue, mad with zeal
To try, in feats which haply some shall rue,
Their perilous alacrity of heel;
Each mortal brings his sack wherein to mew
As in a pliant prison, strong as steel,
His guiltless corse, and clog his nat'ral gait
With cumberance of cloth, embarrassing and strait.

V.

And in their hands they hold to view on high
Vain-gloriously their bags of sturdy thread,
And toss and wave them in th' affronted sky,
Like honour-winning trophies o'er their head,
Assuming merit, that they dare defy
The dangers of a race so droll and dread:
Ah, boast not, sirs, for premature's the brag;
'Tis time in troth to boast when off you put the bag!

VI.

Onward they hasten'd, clamorous and loud,
To where the Monarch sat upon the knoll,
And, having to his presence humbly bow'd,
And bared of reverential hat their poll,
Their dirty sacks they wagg'd, erect and proud,
Impatient, in their fiery fit of soul,
And pertly shak'd, ev'n in the Monarch's eyes,
A cloud of meal and flour that whirling round them flies.

VII.

But as the good King saw them thus prepar'd
To have their persons scabbarded in cloth,
He order'd twenty soldiers of his guard,
All swashing fellows and of biggest growth,

To step upon the green Loan's listed sward,
That they may lend assistance, nothing loath,
To plunge into their pliant sheaths, neck-deep,
Th' ambitious men that dare such over-vent'rous leap.

VIII.

They stepp'd obedient down, and in a trice
Put on the suitors' comical array;
Each sack gap'd wide its monstrous orifice,
To swallow to the neck its living prey;
And, as a swineherd puts in poke a grice
To carry from its sty some little way,
So did the soldiers plunge the men within
Their yawning gloomy gulfs, ev'n to the neck and chin.

IX.

As when of yore the Roman forum, split
By earthquake, yawn'd a black tremendous hole,
Voracious, deep'ning still, though flung in it
Were stones and trees with all their branches whole,
Till, in a noble patriotic fit,
The younker Curtius of devoted soul
Down headlong yarely gallop'd, horse and all,
And dash'd his gallant bones to atoms by the fall:

X.

So fearlessly these men of fair Scotland
(Though not to death) down plung'd into their sacks,
Entoiling into impotence to stand
Their feet, and mobbling legs, and sides, and backs,
Till tightly drawn was every twisted band,
And knotted firmly round their valiant necks,
That, in their rival rage to jump forthright,
They might not struggle off their case of sackcloth tight.

XI.

Nor, when their bodies were accoutred well,
Upon their cumber'd feet stood all upright,
But some, unpractis'd or uncautious, fell
Sousing with lumpish undefended weight,
And roll'd upon the turf full many an ell,
Incapable of uprise, sad in plight;
Till, rais'd again, with those that keep their feet,
Join'd in a line they stand, each in his winding-sheet.

XII.

Oh 'twas an awkward and ridic'lous show,
To see a long sack-muffl'd line of men,
With hatless heads all peeping in a row
Forth from the long smocks that their limbs contain!
For in the wide abyss of cloth below,
Their legs are swallow'd and their stout arms twain;
From chin to toe one shapeless lump they stand,
In clumsy uniform, without leg, arm, or hand!

XIII.

And such their odd appearance was, and show
Of human carcasses in sackcloth dight,
As when the trav'ller, when he haps to go
Down to Grand Cairo in the Turk's despite,
Sees in her chamber'd catacombs below
Full many a mummy horribly upright,
A grisly row of grimly-garnish'd dead,
That seem to pout, and scowl, and shake the brainless head.

XIV.

So queer and so grotesque to view they stood,
All ready at the trump's expected sound,
To take a spring of monstrous altitude,
And scour with majesty of hop the ground:
Yet not so soon the starting-blast ensued;
For, as they stand intent upon the bound,
The hum'rous Monarch, eyeing their array,
Gave then his good advice before they rush'd away.

XV.

"Oh friends! since now your loins are girt," he cried,
"For journey perilous and full of toil,
Behoves it you right cautiously to guide
Your ticklish steps along such vexing soil;
For sorry is the road, and well supplied
With stumps and stumbling-blocks and pits of guile,
And snares, and latent traps with earth bestown,
To catch you by the heels, and bring you groaning down.

XVI.

And woe betide, if unaware you hap
Your body's well-adjusted poise to lose,
For bloody bump and sorrowful sore slap
Await your falling temple, brow, and nose;
And, when once down and fetter'd in a trap,
Hard task 'twill be to extricate your toes:
So, lads, if you regard your noses' weal,
Pray pick out stable steps, and tread with wary heel.

XVII.

And he that longest time without a fall
Shall urge his sad perplexity of way,
And leave behind his fellow-trav'llers all,
Growling for help and grovelling on the clay;
He, for his laudable exertions, shall
Be sung the second victor of the day:
And so God speed you, sirs!" The monarch spoke,
And on the surging air the trumpet's signal broke.

XVIII.

As when a thunderclap, preluding nigh
A storm, growls on the frontiers of the west,
Ere yet the cloud, slow toiling up the sky,
Hath in its mass the mid-day sun supprest,
Alarm'd the timid doves that basking lie
Upon their cot's slope sunny roof at rest,
At once up-flutter in a sudden fray,
And poise th' unsteady wing, and squir in air away:

XIX.

So started, as the herald gave the blast,
At once the suitors in their sacks away,
With gallant up-spring, notable and vast,
A neck-endang'ring violent assay:
The solid earth, as up to sky they past,
Push'd back, seem'd to retire a little way;
And, as they up-flew furious from the ground,
The gash'd and wounded air whizz'd audibly a sound.

XX.

As when on summer eve a soaking rain
Hath after drought bedrench'd the tender grass,
If chance, in pleasant walk along the plain,
Brushing with foot the pearl-hung blades you pass,
A troop of frogs oft leaps from field of grain,
Marshall'd in line, a foul unseemly race,
They halt a space, then vaulting up they fly,
As if they long'd to sit on Iris' bow on high:

XXI.

So leap'd the men, half-sepulchred in sack,
Up-swinging, with their shapes be-monstring sky,
And coursed in air a semicircle track,
Like to the feath'ry-footed Mercury;
Till, spent their impetus, with sounding thwack
Greeted their heels the green ground sturdily;
And some, descending, kept their balance well,
Unbalanc'd some came down, and boisterously fell.

XXII.

The greeted earth beneath the heavy thwacks
Of feet that centripetal down alight,
Of tingling elbows, bruised loins and backs,
Shakes passive, yet indignant of the weight;
For, o'er her bosom, in their plaguy sacks,
Cumbrously roll (a mortifying sight!)
Wreck'd burgher, knight, and laird, and clown pell-mell,
Prostrate, in grievance hard, too terrible to tell.

XXIII.

And aye they struggle at an effort strong
To reinstate their feet upon the plain,
Half-elbowing, half-kneeing, sore and long
Abortively, with bitter sweat and pain,
Till, half upraised, they to their forehead's wrong
Go with a buffet rapping down again,
And sprawl and flounce, and wallow on their backs,
Crying loud for help t' uncord their dolorous sacks.

XXIV.

Not in severer anguish of distress
The fabled giant under Etna lies,
Though rocks and tree-proud promontories press
With vengeance fitting Jove his ruffian size;

Wallowing supine beneath the mountain's stress,
Half-broil'd with brimstone ever hot, he fries,
And, as he turns his vasty carcass o'er,
Out-belches molten rocks, and groans a hideous roar.

XXV.

In such vexatious plight the mortals lie
That founder'd on the threshold of the race,
Where let us leave them, and lift up our eye
To those that keep their feet, and hop apace.
Gramercy! how they bounce it lustily,
Maugre their misery of woven case!
How with their luggage scour they o'er the Loan,
And toil, and moil, and strain, and sweat, and lumber on.

XXVI.

Strange thing it is that men so penn'd in clout,
So wound with swaddling-clothes, should trip it so!
See how with spring incomparably stout,
Spurning the nasty earth, they upward go,
As if they wish'd t'unsocket and knock out
With poll the candles that i'the night-sky glow!
See how attain'd the zenith of their leap,
Earthward they sink again with long descending sweep!

XXVII.

They halt not still; again aloft they hop,
As if they tread the rainbow's gilded bend,
Again upon the quaking turf they drop,
Lighting majestic on their proper end;
I ween, they do not make a moment's stop;
Oh who may now his precious time misspend?
'Tis bustling all and swelt'ring—but behold!
Swop! there a jumper falls aflat upon the mould!

XXVIII.

How can his gyved arms be forward thrust
To break the downsway of his fall just now?
Ah, 'tis his tender nose alone that must
In loving-kindness save from bump his brow;
His soft nose, to its site and duty just,
Is martyr'd to its loyalty, I trow,
For, flatten'd into anguish by the clod,
It weeps, see how it weeps, warm trickling tears of blood!

XXIX.

He bleeds, and from his nostrils' double sluice
Redly bedews the sod of Anster Loan,
Till, in a puddle of his own heart's juice,
He welt'ring writhes with lamentable moan,
And sends his sack in curses to the deuce,
Banning the hour when first he put it on;
Meanwhile, o'erlabour'd in their hobbling pother,
Douse, drops a second down, and whap! there sinks another!

XXX.

Wearied, half-bursten with their hot turmoil,
Their lungs like Vulcan's bellows panting strong,
Pow'rless to stand, or prosecute their toil,
Successively they souse and roll along,
Till, round and round, the carcass-cumber'd soil
Is strewn with havock of the jumping throng,
That make a vain endeavour off to shuffle
The cruel sackcloth coil, that does their persons muffle.

XXXI.

All in despair have sunk, save yonder two
That still their perpendic'lar posture keep,
The only remnant of the jumping crew,
That urge their emulous persisting leap;
Oddspittkins! how with poise exactly true
Clean forward to the ribbon'd pole they sweep;
I cannot say that one is 'fore the other,
So equal side by side they plod near one another.

XXXII.

The pole is gain'd, and to the glorious sun
They turn their sweaty faces round again;
With inextinguishable rage to run,
Southward unflagging and unquell'd they strain.
What! Is not yonder face, where young-ey'd Fun
And Laughter seem enthron'd to hold their reign,
One seen before—ev'n Rob the Bord'rer's phiz?
Ay, now I ken it well, by'r lakin it is his!

XXXIII.

Haste, haste ye, Rob, half-hop, half-run, half-fly,
Wriggle and wrestle in thy bag's despite;
So! shoot like cannon-bullet to the sky;
So! stably down upon thy soles alight;
Up, up again, and fling it gallantly!
Well flung, my Rob, thou art a clever wight;
'Sblood, now thy rival is a step before;
String, string thy sinews up, and jump three yards and more!

XXXIV.

'Tis done—but who is he that at thy side
Thy rival vigorously marches so?
Declare, oh Muse, since thou art eagle-ey'd,
And thine it is, ev'n at a glance, to know
Each son of mortal man, though mumm'd and tied
In long disguising sack from chin to toe!
"He, boy, that marches in such clumsy state,
Is old Edina's child, a waggish Advocate:

XXXV.

For he too has for Maggie Lauder dar'd
To prove the mettle of his heel and shin,
A jolly wight, who trickishly prepar'd
A treach'rous sack to scarf his body in;
A sack, whose bottom was with damp impair'd,
Fusty, half-rotten, mouldy, frail, and thin,
That he, unseen, might in the race's pother,
Thrust out one helpful leg, and keep incag'd its brother.

XXXVI.

And seest thou not his right leg peeping out,
Enfranchis'd, trait'rously to help his gait,
Whilst th'other, still imprison'd in its clout,
Tardily follows its more active mate?"
I see it well—'tis treachery, no doubt;
Beshrew thee now, thou crafty Advocate!
Unfair, unfair! 'tis quite unfair, I say,
Thus with illicit leg to prop thy perilous way!

XXXVII.

Half-free, half-clogg'd, he steals his quick advance,
Nearing at each unlicens'd step the base,
While honest Robert plies the hardier dance,
Most faithful to his sack and to the race;
Now for it, Rob—another jump—but once—
And overjump'd is all th' allotted space;
By Jove, they both have reach'd the base together,
Gain'd is the starting-line, yet gain'd the race hath neither!

XXXVIII.

At once they bend each man his body's frame
Into a bow, before the King and Mag;
At once they ope their lips to double-claim
The race's palm (for now Auld Reekie's wag,
As snail draws in its horn, had, fy for shame!
Drawn his dishonest leg into his bag);
At once they plead the merits of their running,
Good Rob with proofs of force, the wag with quips and punning.

XXXIX.

Me lists not now to variegate my song
With all his sophistry and quip and pun;
Oh 'twould be tiresome, profitless, and long,
To quote his futile arguments air-spun,
His oratoric tricks that dress the wrong
In garb of right, his gybes of naughty fun,
Quiddits and quillits that may well confound one,
And make a rotten sack appear a goodly sound one!

XL.

But Robert to the people's sight appeal'd,
And to the eyes of royal James and Mag,
Who saw his rival's foot too plain reveal'd,
And impudently peering from its bag:
He said 'twas roguish thus to come a-field
With such a paltry hypocritic rag;
The very hole through which his foot was thrust,
Gapes evidence to prove his claim was quite unjust.

XLI.

Long was the plea, and longer it had been,
Had not the populace begun aloud
T'express with clamour their resentment keen
At him who quibbl'd in his rotten shroud:
A thousand hands, uplifted high, were seen
Over the hats and bonnets of the crowd,
With paly hens' eggs that their fingers clench,
To hurl upon his sack conviction, slime, and stench.

XLII.

Which, when he saw all white upheld to view,
Ready to rattle shame about his ears,
He straightway the perplexing claim withdrew,
Urg'd to resign by his judicious fears;
For had he but one minute staid or two,
He for his subtilties, and quirks, and jeers,
Had reap'd a poor and pitiful reward,
And smell'd from head to foot—but not with Syrian nard.

XLIII.

The Monarch, then, well pleas'd that thus the mob
Had settl'd with prejudging voice the case,
Orders his trumpeter to blazon Rob,
Again the winner of the second race:
The fellow blew each cheek into a globe,
And puff'd into deformity his face,
As to the top of heav'n's empyreal frame
He, in a storm of breath, sent up the conqu'ror's name.

XLIV.

His name the rabble took; from tongue to tongue
Bandi'd it flew like fiery-winged shot,
That the blue atmosphere around them rung
With the blabb'd honours of great Robert Scott;
Nor when they thus his triumph stoutly sung,
Were the race-founder'd gentlemen forgot,
That in their trammels still a-flound'ring lay,
And, had they not been rais'd, had lain there to this day.

XLV.

But soon up-rear'd they were: the lads, that late
Had help'd their uncouth livery to don,
Now step upon the green compassionate,
To free them from the house of dole and moan:
The cords, that on their necks were knotted straight,
Are loos'd, and as they lie extended prone,
Of their long scabbards are discas'd the men,
And stand upon their feet, unclogg'd, and free agen.

XLVI.

They take no time (such shame the vanquish'd stung)
Each to snatch up his bag and bring it off;
Away they start, and plunge amid the throng,
Glad their embarrassment of cloth to doff
(So shoots the serpent to the brake along,
And leaves to rot his cast despised slough);
Deep in the throng with elbows sharp they bore,
And fear contemptuous laugh and hateful egg no more.

XLVII.

But now the sun, in mid-day's gorgeous state,
Tow'rs on the summit of the lucid sky,
And human stomachs that were cramm'd of late,
Now empty, send their silent dinner-cry,
Demanding something wherewithal to sate
Their hunger, bread and beer, or penny-pie:
The crowd, obedient to the belly's call,
Begin to munch and eat and nibble, one and all.

XLVIII.

Some from their pockets, or their wallets, drew
Lumps of the roasted flesh of calf or lamb;
Some ply their teeth-arm'd grinding jaws to chew
The tougher slices of the thirsty ham;
Others with bits of green cheese nice and new
Ev'n to the throat their clownish bellies cram,
While horns of ale, from many a barrel fill'd,
Foam white with frothy rage, and soon are swigg'd and swill'd.

XLIX.

James, too, and Mag, and all the courtly train
Of lords and ladies round them not a few,
With sugar'd biscuits sooth'd their stomachs' pain,
For courtly stomachs must be humour'd too;
And from their throats to wash the dusty stain
That they had breath'd when from the sacks it flew,
A glass of wine they slipp'd within their clay,
And if they swallow'd twain, the wiser folk were they.

L.

Nor ceas'd the business of the day meanwhile;
For as the Monarch chew'd his sav'ry cake,
The man whose lungs sustain the trumpet's toil,
Made haste again his noisy tube to take,
And with a cry, which, heard full many a mile,
Caus'd the young crows on Airdrie's trees to quake,
He bade the suitor-pipers to draw nigh,
That they might, round the knoll, their powers of piping try.

LI.

Which, when the rabble heard, with sudden sound
They broke their circle's huge circumference,
And, crushing forward to the southern mound,
They push'd their many-headed shoal immense,
Diffusing to an equal depth around
Their mass of bodies wedg'd compact and dense,
That, standing nigher, they might better hear
The pipers squeaking loud to charm Miss Maggie's ear.

LII.

And soon the pipers, shouldering along
Through the close mob their squeez'd uneasy way,
Stood at the hillock's foot, an eager throng,
Each asking licence from the King to play;
For with a tempest, turbulent and strong,
Labour'd their bags impatient of delay,
Heaving their bloated globes outrageously,
As if in pangs to give their contents to the sky.

LIII.

And every bag, thus full and tempest-ripe,
Beneath its arm lay ready to be prest,
And on the holes of each fair-polish'd pipe,
Each piper's fingers long and white were plac'd:
Fiercely they burn'd in jealous rivalship;
Each madding piper scoff'd at all the rest,
And fleer'd and toss'd contemptuously his head,
As if his skill alone deserv'd fair Maggie's bed.

LIV.

Nor could they wait, so piping mad they were,
Till James gave each man orders to begin;
But in a moment they displode their air
In one tumultuous and unlicens'd din;
Out-flies, in storm of simultaneous blare,
The whizzing wind comprest their bags within,
And whiffling through the wooden tubes so small,
Growls gladness to be freed from such confining thrall.

LV.

Then rose, in burst of hideous symphony,
Of pibrochs and of tunes one mingled roar;
Discordantly the pipes squeal'd sharp and high,
The drones alone in solemn concord snore;
Five hundred fingers, twinkling funnily,
Play twiddling up and down on hole and bore,
Now passage to the shrilly wind denying,
And now a little rais'd to let it out a-sighing.

LVI.

Then rung the rocks and caves of Billyness,
Reverberating back that concert's sound,
And half the lurking Echoes that possess
The glens and hollows of the Fifan ground;
Their shadowy voices strain'd into excess
Of out-cry, loud huzzaing round and round
To all the Dryads of Pitkirie wood,
That now they round their trees should dance in frisky mood.

LVII.

As when the sportsman with report of gun,
Alarms the sea-fowl of the Isle of May,
Ten thousand mews and gulls that shade the sun
Come flapping down in terrible dismay,
And with a wild and barb'rous concert stun
His ears, and scream, and shriek, and wheel away;
Scarce can the boatman hear his plashing oar;
Yell caves and eyries all, and rings each Maian shore.

LVIII.

Just so around the knoll did pipe and drone
Whistle and hum a discord strange to hear,
Tort'ring with violence of shriek and groan,
Kingly, and courtly, and plebeian ear;
And still the men had humm'd and whistl'd on,
Ev'n till each bag had burst its bloated sphere,
Had not the King, uprising, wav'd his hand,
And check'd the boist'rous din of such unmanner'd band.

LIX.

On one side of his face a laugh was seen,
On t'other side a half-form'd frown lay hid;
He frown'd, because they petulantly keen,
Set up their piping forward and unbid:
He laugh'd, for who could have control'd his mien,
Hearing such crash of pibrochs as he did?
He bade them orderly the strife begin,
And play each man the tune wherewith the fair he'd win.

LX.

Whereat the pipers ceased their idle toil
Of windy music wild and deafening,
And made too late (what they forgot e'erwhile)
A gen'ral bow to Maggie and their King;
But as they vail'd their bare heads tow'rd the soil,
Oh then there happ'd a strange portentous thing,
Which had not good my Muse confirm'd for true,
Myself had not believed, far less have told to you.

LXI.

For lo! whilst all their bodies yet were bent,
Breaks from the spotless blue of eastern sky
A globe of fire, (miraculous ostent!)
Bursten from some celestial cleft on high;
And thrice in circle round the firmament
Trail'd its long light the gleamy prodigy,
Till on the ring of pipers down it came,
And set their pipes, and drones, and chanters in a flame.

LXII.

'Twas quick and sudden as th' electric shock—
One moment lighted and consumed them all;
As is the green hair of the tufted oak
Scath'd into blackness by the fulmin'd ball;
Or, as spark-kindled, into fire and smoke,
Flashes and fumes the nitrous grain so small,
So were their bagpipes, in a twink, like tinder
Fired underneath their arms, and burn'd into a cinder.

LXIII.

Yet so innocuous was the sky-fall'n flame,
That, save their twangling instruments alone,
Unsinged their other gear remain'd the same,
Ev'n to the nap that stuck their coats upon;
Nor did they feel its heat, when down it came
On errand to destroy pipe, bag, and drone;
But stood in blank surprise, when to the ground
Dropt down in ashes black their furniture of sound.

LXIV.

Crest-fall'n they stood, confounded and distrest,
And fix'd upon the turf their stupid look,
Conscious that Heav'n forbade them to contest
By such a burning token of rebuke.
The rabble, too, its great alarm confest,
For every face the ruddy blood forsook,
As with their white, uprolling, ghastly eyes
They spied the streaky light wheel whizzing from the skies.

LXV.

And still they to that spot of orient heav'n,
Whence burst the shining globe, look up aghast,
Expecting, when th' empyreal pavement riv'n,
A second splendour to the earth should cast;
But when they saw no repetition giv'n,
Chang'd from alarm to noisy joy at last,
They set up such a mix'd tremendous shout,
As made the girdling heav'ns to bellow round about.

LXVI.

And such a crack and peal of laughter rose,
When the poor pipers bagpipe-less they saw,
As when a flock of jetty-feather'd crows,
On winter morning when the skies are raw,
Come from their woods in long and sooty rows,
And over Anster through their hoarse throats caw;
The sleepy old wives, on their warm chaff-beds,
Up from their bolsters rear, afear'd, their flannel'd heads.

LXVII.

Then did th' affronted pipers slink away,
With faces fix'd on earth for very shame;
For not one remnant of those pipes had they
Wherewith they late so arrogantly came;
But in a black and ashy ruin lay
Their glory moulder'd by the scathing flame;
Yet in their hearts they cursed (and what the wonder?)
That fire to which their pipes so quick were giv'n a plunder.

LXVIII.

And scarce they off had slunk, when with a bound
Great Robert Scott sprang forth before the King;
For he alone, when all the pipers round
Stood rang'd into their fire-devoted ring,
Had kept snug distance from the fated ground,
As if forewarn'd of that portentous thing;
He stood and laugh'd, as underneath his arm
He held his bagpipe safe, unscath'd with fiery harm.

LXIX.

His hollow drone, with mouth wide-gaping, lay
Over his shoulder pointing to the sky,
Ready to spue its breath, and puff away
The lazy silver clouds that sit on high:
His bag swell'd madly to begin the play,
And with its bowel-wind groan'd inwardly;
Not higher heav'd the wind-bags, which of yore
Ulysses got from him who ruled th' Æolian shore.

LXX.

He thus the King with reverence bespoke:
"My liege, since heav'n with bagpipe-levell'd fire
Hath turn'd my brethren's gear to dust and smoke,
And testified too glaringly its ire,
It fits me now, as yet my bagpipe's poke
Remains unsinged, and every pipe entire,
To play my tune—Oh King, with your good will—
And to the royal ear to prove my piping skill."

LXXI.

Nodded his liege assent, and straightway bade
Him stand a-top o' th' hillock at his side;
A-top he stood; and first a bow he made
To all the crowd that shouted far and wide;
Then, like a piper dext'rous at his trade,
His pipes to play adjusted and applied;
Each finger rested on its proper bore;
His arm appear'd half-raised to wake the bag's uproar.

LXXII.

A space he silent stood, and cast his eye
In meditation upwards to the pole,
As if he pray'd some fairy pow'r in sky
To guide his fingers right o'er bore and hole;
Then pressing down his arm, he gracefully
Awak'd the merry bagpipe's slumb'ring soul,
And pip'd and blew, and play'd so sweet a tune,
As might have well unspher'd the reeling midnight moon.

LXXIII.

His ev'ry finger, to its place assign'd,
Mov'd quiv'ring like the leaf of aspen tree,
Now shutting up the skittish squeaking wind,
Now op'ning to the music passage free;
His cheeks, with windy puffs therein confin'd,
Were swoln into a red rotundity,
As from his lungs into the bag was blown
Supply of needful air to feed the growling drone.

LXXIV.

And such a potent tune did never greet
The drum of human ear with lively strain;
So merry, that from dancing on his feet
No man undeaf could stockishly refrain;
So loud, 'twas heard a dozen miles complete,
Making old Echo pipe and hum again,
So sweet, that all the birds in air that fly,
Charm'd into new delight, come sailing through the sky.

LXXV.

Crow, sparrow, linnet, hawk, and white-wing'd dove,
Wheel in aërial jig o'er Anster Loan;
The sea-mews from each Maian cleft and cove
O'er the deep sea come pinion-wafted on;
The light-detesting bats now flap above,
Scaring the sun with wings to day unknown—
Round Robert's head they dance, they cry, they sing,
And shear the subtil sky with broad and playful wing.

LXXVI.

And eke the mermaids that in ocean swim,
Drawn by that music from their shelly caves,
Peep now unbashful from the salt-sea brim,
And flounce and plash exulting in the waves;
They spread at large the white and floating limb,
That Neptune amorously clips and laves,
And kem with combs of pearl and coral fair
Their long sleek oozy locks of green redundant hair.

LXXVII.

Nor was its influence less on human ear;
First from their gilded chairs up-start at once
The royal James and Maggie seated near,
Enthusiastic both and mad to dance:
Her hand he snatch'd, and look'd a merry leer,
Then caper'd high in wild extravagance,
And on the grassy summit of the knoll,
Wagg'd each monarchial leg in galliard strange and droll.

LXXVIII.

As when a sun-beam, from the waving face
Of well-fill'd waterpail reflected bright,
Varies upon the chamber-walls its place,
And, quiv'ring, tries to cheat and foil the sight;
So quick did Maggie, with a nimble grace,
Skip patt'ring to and fro, alert and light,
And, with her noble colleague in the reel,
Haughtily heav'd her arms, and shook the glancing heel.

LXXIX.

The Lords and Ladies next, who sat or stood
Near to the Piper and the King around,
Smitten with that contagious dancing mood,
'Gan hand in hand in high lavolt to bound,
And jigg'd it on as featly as they could,
Circling in sheeny rows the rising ground,
Each sworded Lord a Lady's soft palm griping,
And to his mettle rous'd at such unwonted piping.

LXXX.

Then did th' infectious hopping-mania seize
The circles of the crowd that stood more near,
Till, round and round, far spreading by degrees,
It madden'd all the Loan to kick and rear;
Men, women, children, lilt and ramp, and squeeze,
Such fascination takes the gen'ral ear!
Ev'n babes that at their mothers' bosoms hung,
Their little willing limbs fantastically flung!

LXXXI.

And hoar-hair'd men and wives, whose marrow age
Hath from their hollow bones suck'd out and drunk,
Canary in unconscionable rage,
Nor feel their sinews wither'd now and shrunk;
Pellmell in random couples they engage,
And boisterously wag feet, arms, and trunk,
As if they strove, in capering so brisk,
To heave their aged knees up to the solar disk.

LXXXII.

And cripples from beneath their shoulders fling
Their despicable crutches far away,
Then, yok'd with those of stouter limbs, up-spring
In hobbling merriment, uncouthly gay;
And some on one leg stand y-gamboling;
For why? The other short and frail had they;
Some, whose both legs distorted were and weak,
Dance on their poor knee-pans in mad preposterous freak.

LXXXIII.

So on they trip, King, Maggie, Knight, and Earl,
Green-coated courtier, satin-snooded dame,
Old men and maidens, man, wife, boy, and girl,
The stiff, the supple, bandy-legg'd, and lame—
All suck'd and wrapt into the dance's whirl,
Inevitably witch'd within the same;
Whilst Rob, far-seen, o'erlooks the huddling Loan,
Rejoicing in his pipes, and squeals serenely on.

LXXXIV.

But such a whirling and a din there was,
Of bodies and of feet that heel'd the ground,
As when the Maelstrom in his craggy jaws
Engluts the Norway waves with hideous sound;
In vain the black sea-monster plies his paws
'Gainst the strong eddy that impels him round;
Rack'd and convuls'd, the ingorging surges roar,
And fret their frothy wrath, and reel from shore to shore.

LXXXV.

So reel the mob, and with their feet up-cast
From the tramp'd soil a dry and dusty cloud,
That shades the huddling hurly-burly vast
From the warm sun as with an earthy shroud;
Else, had the warm sun spied them wriggling fast,
He sure had laugh'd at such bewitched crowd,
For never, since heav'n's baldric first he trod,
Tripp'd was such country dance beneath his fiery road.

LXXXVI.

Then was the shepherd, that on Largo-law
Sat idly whistling to his feeding flock,
Dismay'd, when looking south-eastward he saw
The dusty cloud more black than furnace-smoke;
He lean'd his ear, and catch'd with trembling awe
The dance's sound that th'ambient ether broke;
He bless'd himself and cried, "By sweet St John!
The devil hath got a job in Anster's dirty Loan."

LXXXVII.

At length the mighty Piper, honest Rob,
His wonder-working melody gave o'er,
When on a sudden all the flouncing mob
Their high commotion ceas'd and toss'd no more;
Trunk, arm, and leg, forgot to shake and bob,
That bobb'd and shak'd so parlously before;
On ground, fatigu'd, the panting dancers fall,
Wond'ring what witch's craft had thus embroil'd them all.

LXXXVIII.

And some cried out, that o'er the Piper's head
They had observ'd a little female fay,
Clad in green gown, and purple-striped plaid,
That fed his wind-bag, aidant of the play;
Some, impotent to speak, and almost dead
With jumping, as on earth they sat or lay,
Wip'd from their brows, with napkin, plaid, or gown,
The globes of shining sweat that ooze and trickle down.

LXXXIX.

Nor less with jig o'er-labour'd and o'er-wrought,
Down on their chairs dropt Maggie and the King,
Amaz'd what supernat'ral spell had caught
And forc'd their heels into such frolicking;
And much was Mag astonish'd, when she thought
(As sure it was an odd perplexing thing)
That Robert's tune was to her ear the same
As what Tom Puck late play'd, when from her pot he came.

XC.

But from that hour, the Monarch and the mob
Gave Maggie Lauder's name to Robert's tune,
And so shall it be call'd, while o'er the globe
Travels the waning and the crescent moon,
And from that hour the puissant Piper Rob,
Whose bagpipe wak'd so hot a rigadoon,
From his well-manag'd bag, and drone, and chanter,
Obtain'd the glorious name of Mighty Rob the Ranter.

CANTO V.

I.

Oh for that pond'rous broomstick, whereon rode
Grim Beattie Laing,* hors'd daringly sublime!
So would I fly above the solar road,
To where the Muses sit on high and chime;

* The famous witch of Pittenweem. See *Satan's Invisible World Discovered.*

Eigh! I would kiss them in their bright abode,
And from their lips suck Poetry and Rhyme;
Till Jove (if such my boldness should displease him)
Cry, "Fy, thou naughty boy! pack off and mount thy besom."

II.

It needed not that with a third exclaim,
King JAMES's trumpeter aloud should cry
Through his long alchemy, the famous name
Of him who, piping, got the victory;
For, sooth to tell, man, boy, and girl, and dame,
Him the great Prince of Pipers testify,
Not with huzzas and jabbering of tongues,
But with hard puffing breasts and dance-o'erwearied lungs.

III.

And truly had the crier will'd to shout
The doughty Piper's name through polish'd trump,
His breath had not suffic'd to twang it out,
So did the poor man's lights puff, pant, and jump:
Wherefore to rest them from that dancing-bout,
A while they sat or lay on back or rump,
Gulping with open mouths and nostrils wide
The pure refreshing waves of Jove's aërial tide.

IV.

But, unfatigued, upon the hillock's crown
Stood ROB, as if his lungs had spent no breath,
And looked with conscious exultation down
Upon the dance's havoc wide beneath,
Laughing to see th' encumber'd plain bestrown
With people whirl'd and wriggled nigh to death;
Erelong he thus addrest, with reverend air,
The King that, breathless yet, sat puffing in his chair:

V.

"My Liege! though well I now with triple claim
The guerdon of my threefold toils may ask,
As independent of success i'the game
Of jingling words, the ballad-maker's task;
Yet, as I too with honourable aim
Have tapp'd Apollo's rhyme-o'erflowing cask,
Allow me, good my King! to ope my budget,
And tell my witty tale, that you and MAG may judge it."

VI.

Whereto his breathless King made slow reply
(He drew a gulp of air each word between)—
"Great—Piper!—Mighty—ROB!—Belov'd—of sky!
Oh prov'd—too well thy—piping craft—has been;
Witness my lungs—that play so puff—ingly,
And witness yonder—laughter-moving scene!
I'm pinch'd for wind—Ha, ha!—scarce breath I draw—
Pardi!—a sight like yon my Kingship never saw!

VII.

Woes me! how sweating in prostration vast,
Men, wives, boys, maidens, lie in dust bestrown,
Gaping for respiration, gasping fast,
Half my liege subjects wreck'd on ANSTER Loan!
'Twill need, methinks, a hideous trumpet-blast,
To rouse them from thus grov'lling basely prone;
For such effort my man's lungs yet are frail;
So, ROB, take thou his trump and rouse them for thy tale."

VIII.

He spake, and at the hint, the Ranter took
The throated metal from the Herald's hand,
And blew a rousing clangour, wherewith shook
Green sea, and azure sky, and cloddy land:
Up-sprung, as from a trance, with startl'd look,
The prostrate people, and erected stand,
Turning their faces to the knap of ground,
Whence burst upon their ears the loud assaulting sound.

IX.

Then, crowding nearer in a vasty shoal,
They press their sum of carcasses more close,
Till crush'd, and cramm'd, and straiten'd round the knoll,
They rear and poise their bodies on their toes:
So were they pack'd and mortis'd, that the whole
Seem'd but one lump incorp'rate to compose;
One mass of human trunks unmov'd they show,
Topp'd with ten thousand heads all moving to and fro.

X.

And from the tongues of all those heads there rose
A confus'd murmur through the multitude,
As when the merry gale of summer blows
Upon the tall tops of a stately wood,
And rocks the long consociated boughs,
Rustling amid the leaves a discord rude;
High perch'd aloft the cuckoo rides unseen,
Embower'd with plenteous shades, and tufts of nodding green.

XI.

Then wav'd the RANTER round and round his hand,
Commanding them to still their hubbub loud:
All in a moment, still and noiseless, stand
The widely-circumfus'd and heaving crowd,
As if upon their gums at ROB's command
Were pinn'd those tongues that jabber'd late so proud;
Tow'rds him, as to their centre, every ear
Inclines its mazy hole, th'expected tale to hear.

XII.

But when the RANTER from his height beheld
The silent world of heads diffus'd below,
With all their ears agape, his visage swell'd,
And burn'd with honest laughter's ruddy glow;
For who had not from gravity rebell'd,
Girt with infinitude of noddles so?
He soon into composure starch'd his phiz,
And op'd his fluent mouth, and told his tale, which is—

XIII.

"Where Thirdpart-house upon the level plain
Rears up its sooty chimnies high in air,
There liv'd of old, in ALEXANDER's reign,
Miss SUSAN SCOTT, a lady young and fair,
Who sith that death her parents both had ta'en,
Sole child, their coffers and their fields did heir—
Their fields, that waved with Ceres' green array,
Their coffers, gorged with gold, where Mammon prison'd lay.

XIV.

Her form was beauteous as the budding spring,
Shaped by the mother of almighty love;
Her soul was but a sorry paltry thing,
As e'er was quicken'd by the breath of Jove:
Her person might have pleased a crowned King,
Or shone a Dryad in her Thirdpart grove;
Her soul, her silly soul, alas, to tell!
Was as a rotten egg enclosed in golden shell.

XV.

All day she, sitting at her window, cast
O'er her estate a proud and greedy eye;
Now measuring her fields, how broad, how vast,
How valuably rich they sunning lie;
Now summing up the bolls that in the blast
Wave yet unshorn, obnoxious to the sky,
And counting, avariciously, what more
Of gold th' unsickl'd crop would add unto her store.

XVI.

But when the grim and hooded night let fall
O'er Thirdpart's smoky roofs her ugly shade,
She hasten'd from her candle-lighten'd hall
To where her darling coffer'd god was laid,
And freeing him with key from box's thrall,
On floor the gaudy deity display'd,
And with a miser's fumbling palm'd each toy,
And kiss'd bare Mammon's limbs, and laugh'd in silly joy.

XVII.

With her resided that fam'd wizard old,
Her uncle and her guardian, MICHAEL SCOTT,
Who there, in Satan's arts malignly bold,
His books of dev'lish efficacy wrote;
And, lackied round (tremendous to be told!)
With demons hung with tails like shaggy goat,
Employ'd their ministrations damn'd to ring
Madrid's resounding bells, and fright the Spanish King

XVIII.

Fit guardian he for such a peevish ward:
He check'd not her perversity of soul,
But, hell's pernicious logic studying hard,
Gave up the lady to her own control:
Thus fost'ring, by his foolish disregard,
The cank'ring vice that o'er her spirit stole:
Captious and proud she was, and fond of strife—
The pertest, prettiest jade of all the girls of Fife.

XIX.

Yet not the less her beauty's wafted fame
A mob of suitors to her mansion drew;
Her face had charms to lure them and inflame,
Her dow'r had mickle fascination too:
On cap'ring steeds from all the county came
Fife's sparkish lairds, all resolute to woo,
And win, with courtship's sly assiduous art,
Fair Susan's worthy dow'r, and pettish worthless heart.

XX.

So num'rous were her lovers, that, in troth,
I scarce by name can reckon up them all;
Ardross and Largo, gallant fellows both,
Pitcorthie, and Rankeilor, and Newhall,
And Newark, with his coat of scarlet cloth,
And short Stravithy, and Rathillet tall,
And proud Balcomie with his tassel'd hat,
And Gibliston the lean, and Sauchop round and fat.

XXI.

All these, and many more love-pining men,
She flouted from her chamber scornfully;
To one alone she us'd not such disdain,
The goodly Charly Melvil of Carnbee;
For he, the singly cunning of the train,
Enforc'd with costly gifts his am'rous plea,
And brib'd her dull affections icy-cold,
With jewell'd gairish rings, and knacks of labour'd gold.

XXII.

For ev'ry time he snatch'd her downy fist,
With its soft warmth to paddle and to play,
He hung a bracelet on her iv'ry wrist,
A golden bracelet like a sunbeam gay;
And when her lip he rapturously kist
(A kiss she ne'er refus'd for such a pay),
He dropt upon her white neck from his haud
A tangl'd chain of gold, worth many a rood of land.

XXIII.

Till of his trinkets so profuse he grew,
That soon exhausted was his purse's store,
And half his lands were in a month or two
Mortgaged for money to procure her more;
Yet ne'er could he prevail on froward Sue,
Though ne'er he ceas'd t'importune and implore,
T' appoint the long-retarded marriage-day,
And cure his love, and give her promised hand away.

XXIV.

One summer eve, as in delightful walk,
Handed, they past down Thirdpart's avenue,
And, in a lightsome interchange of talk,
Whined out their loves, as lovers use to do,
Whilst ev'ry hairy bush upon its stalk
Nodded for joy around them where it grew,
Charles took advantage of the lovely hour,
Again t' impress his suit with tongue's glib wordy power.

XXV.

'Oh my sweet Susan! sweet my Susan oh!'—
(Here beat the poor laird his afflicted breast)—
'Cast round thine eye, that eye that witches so,
On God's wide world in beauty's garment drest,
On yonder many-listed clouds that glow
Heav'n's tap'stry curtaining the blazing west,
On yonder setting rays up-shot on high,
Like tiny wires of gold aslant the gorgeous sky.

XXVI.

Look how the bushy top of ev'ry tree
Is mantled o'er with evening's borrow'd sheen,
And seems to wag and wave more boastfully
To the sweet breeze its leafy wig of green;
Each herb, and flower, and whin, and bush, we see,
Laughs jocund in creation's richest scene,
Whilst earth reflects on heav'n, and heav'n on earth,
Of God's created things the beauty and the mirth:

XXVII.

All these are passing lovely to the view,
But lovelier, tenfold lovelier, are to me,
Thy form and countenance, my bonny Sue!
Creation's beauties all are summ'd in thee;
Thine eye out-lustres heav'n's most lucid blue;
Thy cheek out-blooms earth's bloomiest flower and tree;
And evening's gaudy clouds, that paint the air,
Are fripp'ry to the locks of thy long golden hair!

XXVIII.

Then hey! my sweeting, when shall come the day
Ordain'd to give me such transcendant charms?
Still must I pine and fret at thy delay,
Capriciously forbidden from thy arms,
And, like a pair of bellows, puff away
My sighs, and swelter in hot Cupid's harms?—
For heav'n's sake, Susan, on my case have pity,
And fix our wedding-day, my chick, my dear, my pretty!'

XXIX.

This said, he, gazing on her saucy eye,
Forestalls the angry answer of her tongue;
When hark! a sound of rushing, wildly high,
Is heard the trees adjoining from among,
As if a whirlwind, bursting from the sky,
Their tops on one another sore had swung;
And lo! out-springs in maddest pitch of wrath,
Pitcorthie's biggest bull upon their peaceful path.

XXX.

'Fly, fly, my love!' the gen'rous Melvil said,
And interpos'd to meet the monster's shock;
For fiercely rush'd he on th' endanger'd maid,
Mad at the glaring of her scarlet frock:
'Fly, fly, my love!'—she turn'd about and fled,
With face through terror pale and white as smoke,
And left her laird, at danger of his skull,
To wrestle for his life, and parry with the bull.

XXXI.

The bull's long horns he grip'd, and tow'rd the ground
Press'd down with might his hugy head robust,
Whilst, madder thus defrauded of his wound,
The brawny brute his bulk still forward thrust,
And, riving with his heels the soil around,
Bespatter'd heav'n with turf, and sod, and dust,
And bellow'd till each tree around him shook,
And Echo bellow'd back from her aërial nook.

XXXII.

At last th'intrepid lover, guessing well
That now far off from harm his Sue was sped,
Ungrip'd the horns, that, white and terrible,
From brow their long and curling menace spread;
But scarce his grasp was loos'd, when (sad to tell!)
Th'advantag'd brute toss'd churlishly his head,
And with one horn, that suddenly uprose,
Demolish'd and tore off the gallant Melvil's nose.

XXXIII.

Clean by the roots uptorn was Melvil's nose,
Leaving its place deform and foul with blood;
Yet stood he not to reap some heavier blows,
And catch in napkin the red rushing flood;
But quite regardless of his face's woes,
He, hurrying down the alley of the wood,
Fled as if life were hung upon his heels;
Nor in his sweaty haste his nose's torment feels.

XXXIV.

Thus by the mettle of his heels he bore
His life in safety from the brute away,
And left behind his wound's unsightly gore,
To all the wild-cats of the grove a prey:
Homeward, in dumpish mood, afflicted sore,
He took with lamentation loud his way,
Wailing his piteous bitterness of case,
His nasal honours crush'd, and ghastly havock'd face.

XXXV.

Six weeks he kept his mansion at Carnbee,
Waiting his nose's re-establishment,
In vain; repair'd, alas! it could not be,
Too sore that horn the cartilage had shent.
Fife's surgeons crowding came, for love of fee,
With plasters and with saws of loathsome scent,
In vain; what could or saw or surgeon do?
Gone was the good old nose, and who could rear a new?

XXXVI.

Meanwhile he ceas'd not, twice a week, to send
Sweet cards to her, who did his thoughts employ,
Memorials dear, which as he sat and penn'd,
Perch'd laughing on his quill Love's mighty boy,
And on the paper from its inky end
Distill'd delight, and tenderness, and joy;
His cards he sent, but (oh, the sin and shame!)
From wicked shameless SUE there ne'er an answer came.

XXXVII.

Nor could her cruel silence be explain'd,
Till Fame blew up the tidings to his house,
That she, for whom his nose was marr'd and pain'd,
To whom so long he had addrest his vows,
Had, for another, now his love disdain'd,
Urg'd by her uncle NEWARK to espouse;
That publish'd were their bans, that now was fixt
The wedding to be held on Monday forenoon next.

XXXVIII.

Then was the heart of injur'd MELVIL rent
With bitter passion at a slight so base;
That moment up he started, with intent
To go and chide th'apostate to her face:
Forth from his house in surly chafe he went,
Apparell'd in his coat of golden lace;
And eastward took his way alone and sad,
Half cursing, in his heart, a maid so base and bad.

XXXIX.

But when the little boys and girls survey'd
His lack-nose visage as he travell'd by,
Some to their mothers' houses ran, afraid
To tell them what a face had met their eye;
Some with their fingers pointed undismay'd
Giggling and blythe at his deformity;
Ev'n ploughmen, at the road-edge, paus'd from toil,
And held their sturdy sides, and loudly laugh'd a while.

XL.

Yet onward held the hapless laird his gait,
Regardless of their mockery and scorn;
His sole vexation was the girl ingrate,
In whose defence his beauty had been shorn.
He soon attain'd the ample hall, where sate,
In morning dishabille, the fair forsworn;
And, ent'ring boldly in his angry mood,
With grimly-flatten'd face before her frowning stood.

XLI.

'Fy, horror! who art thou,' she scoffing said,
'That with defeature horrible to see,
Dar'st thus into my room advance thy stride,
To fright my lapdog, and to sicken me?
Go, hie thee homeward, thou deform, and hide
That aspect in the dingles of Carnbee;
There with thy rabbits burrow thee, till sprout
Forth from between thy cheeks a beautifying snout.'

XLII.

This said, th'insulting creature from her chair,
Red with resentment, on a sudden springs,
And bolting forward with a saucy air,
Her shapely person from the chamber flings,
Leaving her honest laird confounded there,
Heart-anguish'd by vexation's sharpest stings,
That he may vent his anger and his fume
On the fair carved chairs that decorate her room.

XLIII.

He got no long time to displode and vent
On the fair chairs his bosom-choking ire;
For, from his closet by Miss SUSAN sent,
Sir MICHAEL rush'd, the sorcerer stout and dire,
With staff in hand, to rattle chastisement
Upon the ribs and backbone of the squire:
He beat him from the house with magic stick,
And added surly words, and rude discourteous kick.

XLIV.

Poor MELVIL! griev'd, and mortified, and dampt,
His back he turn'd upon th'uncivil door,
And, musing vengeance, down the alley trampt,
As boil'd his heart with indignation o'er;
He bit his lip, and curs'd the soil, and stampt,
Chafing his wrath with imprecation more;
For what man, so misus'd, could have forborne
To ban Sir MICHAEL SCOTT, and SUE the fair forsworn?

XLV.

So down the avenue he banning past,
Scarce conscious whither in his fret he went,
Till twilight tenanted the sky at last,
Pavilioning o'er earth her sable tent,
And the round moon, up-wheeling from the vast
Of sea, in pomp of clouds magnificent,
Embellish'd, with her sober silvery shine,
The leaves and barky trunks of Thirdpart's fir and pine.

XLVI.

'Alas! was e'er like me poor lover crost?'
(He thus aloud deplored his wretched case)
'So fool'd, abus'd, and cocker'd to my cost,
So beaten into sorrow and disgrace!
Was't not enough that for the jade I lost
The rising honours of my ruin'd face;
But, like a hedge-born beggar tattars-hung,
Thus from her hated gate I must be switch'd and flung?

XLVII.

May vengeance seize thee, thou foul wizard churl,
For basting me at such an irksome rate!
May Satan gripe thee by thy heel, and hurl
Thy carcass whizzing through hell's hottest gate!
And as for thee, thou proud ingrateful girl,
Whose baseness, to my grief, I know too late,
May some good pow'r, the injur'd lover's friend,
On thy perfidious head a wing'd requital send!'

XLVIII.

His pray'r he thus ejaculating spake,
Nor knew that some good pow'r was nigh to hear;
For in the middle of a flow'ry brake,
That white with moonshine spread its thicket near,
Lay Tommy Puck, the gentle fay, awake,
And Mrs Puck, his gentle lady dear,
Basking and lolling in the lunar ray,
And tumbling up and down in brisk fantastic play.

XLIX.

Quoth frisky Tommy to his elfin wife,
'Didst thou not hear the gentleman, my chuck?
'Tis young CARNBEE, the sweetest laird of Fife,
Whom sour Sir MICHAEL with his cane has struck.
What think ye? By Titania's precious life!
Fits it not now the tender-hearted Puck
T'assist an injur'd lover, and to plot
A scheme of nice revenge on SUE and MICHAEL SCOTT?'

L.

'O yes, my dear!' his fairy consort said,
'Go forth, and to the man address thy talk:'
This heard, he from his bushy arbour's shade
Flung out his minim stature on the walk,
And stood in dwarfish finery array'd,
Gaudy as summer-bean's bloom-cover'd stalk;
He doff'd his hat, and made a bow profound,
And thus bespoke the laird in words of pleasing sound:

LI.

'Marvel not, MELVIL, that before thy feet
I plant me thus in fearless attitude;
For I have heard, within my close retreat,
What thou hast utter'd in thy fretful mood;
And well I know thy truth how with deceit
Repaid, thy faith with base ingratitude:
Good soul! I pity thee with all my heart,
And therefore from my bush to thy assistance start.

LII.

For much it grieves Tom Puck's too feeling breast,
That one so good, so liberal and true,
Should thus become a laughter and a jest,
Mock'd, jilted, beaten into black and blue:
I like to help whom malice has opprest,
And prompt a lover generous as you;
So with attention list what I propose,
To baffle and avenge, and laugh to scorn your foes.

LIII.

On Monday next, th'appointed wedding-day,
For perjur'd SUE her NEWARK to espouse,
When her long hall with feasting shall be gay,
And smoke with meats, with riot, and with bouse,
From thy paternal mansion haste away,
At height of noon, to Thirdpart's bustling house,
That thou, by time of dinner, may be there,
Prepar'd to climb the steps of her detested stair.

LIV.

And when th'exulting bridegroom and his bride,
Surrounded with their festive spousal train,
Are seated at their tables long and wide,
Wielding their noisy forks and knives amain,
Then burst into the hall with dauntless stride,
Through menials, greasy cooks, and serving-men,
Nor speak a word though in thy way they stand,
But dash the scroyls aside with swing of boist'rous hand.

LV.

Surprise, be sure, shall seize the feasters all
At such a bold intruder on their treat;
Their forks, half-lifted to their mouths, shall fall
Down on their plates, unlighten'd of their meat;
Yet speak not still, but casting round the hall
An eye whose every glance is fire and threat,
Thou in a corner of the room shalt see
Sir MICHAEL's magic staff, the same that basted thee.

LVI.

Snatch up that magic energetic stick,
And, in thy clench'd hand wielding it with might,
On MICHAEL's white bald pate discharge thou quick
A pelt enough to stun the wizard wight:
Strange consequence shall follow from that lick;
Yet be not thou amaz'd or struck with fright,
But springing to the table's upper end,
Let on his niece's nose an easier pat descend.

LVII.

I will not now unfold what odd event
From either stroke will suddenly ensue;
Enough to know, that plenteous punishment
Shall light on grim Sir MICHAEL and on SUE:
Go—by your nose's cure, be confident
That Tommy Puck aright thus counsels you.'—
This said, he, from a vial silver-bright,
Pour'd out upon his palm a powder small and white;

LVIII.

And to his mouth up-lifting it, he blows
The magic dust on MELVIL's blemish'd face,
When (such its power) behold another nose
Sprouts out upon the scarr'd and skinless place,
And to th'astonish'd moon, fair-jutting, shows,
Its supplemental elegance and grace:
Which done, he, shining like a bright glow-worm,
Plung'd deep amid the brake his puny pretty form.

LIX.

Amaze had taken MELVIL, when appear'd
Erect before his steps the pigmy fay;
Yet not with less attention had he heard
What courteous Tommy did so kindly say:
That heart, late vex'd and tortur'd, now was cheer'd,
And merrily beat in Hope's delightful play:
Homeward he jogg'd from Thirdpart's haunted shade
Proud of his novel nose, and Tommy's tender'd aid.

LX.

Arriv'd the day when saucy SUE should wed
Young NEWARK, vap'ring in his scarlet coat;
From his paternal mansion MELVIL sped
To Thirdpart house, t'achieve his ready plot.

'Twas dinner-time; the tables all were spread
With luscious sirloins reeking richly hot,
Gravies and pies, and steaming soups of hare,
And roasted hen and goose, and titbits nice and rare.

LXI.

SUE at the table's place of honour sat,
Dealing the warm broth from its vessel out;
Whilst, slashing with his knife through lean and fat,
Carv'd at the lower end Sir MICHAEL stout:
'Twas nought but mirth, and junketing, and chat,
And handing wings and legs of fowl about,
And noise of silver spoons, and clank and clatter
Of busy forks and knives, of porringer and platter.

LXII.

Squire MELVIL heard without the dinner's din:
Nor tarried; but with brisk and boist'rous bound,
Jump'd up the stairs, and rudely rushing in,
Dash'd down whom standing in his way he found;
Menials and apron'd cooks of greasy chin,
Fist-founder'd, went a-rapping to the ground,
With all their loads of sauces, meats, and plates,
In ruin fat and rich hurl'd on their pitiful pates.

LXIII.

Astonish'd were the feasters when they view'd
Such bold intruder stand before their eyes;
The morsels in their mouths that lay half-chew'd,
Could not be swallow'd through their great surprise;
Their half-rais'd forks, bestuck with gobbets good,
Dropt, as if impotent more high to rise;
Each on his neighbour cast a meaning stare,
As if he dumbly ask'd, What does Squire MELVIL there?

LXIV.

'Twas for a moment silent in the hall,
As if pale Death, the chapless and the grim,
Had taken by the throat, and choak'd them all,
With his long, fleshless, scraggy, fingers slim;
Till, throwing round his glance from wall to wall,
The Squire discern'd the staff with tassel trim—
Sir MICHAEL's staff with head of silver white,
Wherewith he was enjoin'd its owner's poll to smite.

LXV.

He flew, he grasp'd it by its silver rind,
And to the ceiling swinging it on high,
Brought down on MICHAEL's pate, as quick as wind,
A pelt that whizz'd and rattl'd horribly;
Sounded his bald skull with the stroke unkind,
Re-echoing in each lore-fill'd cavity,
When, oh the wonder! on his high arm-chair,
Chang'd was the churlish knight that instant to a hare!

LXVI.

His dainty head with learning so replete,
Collaps'd, grew round, and little, and long-ear'd;
His arms, that yet were stretch'd to carve the meat,
Quite shrunken into two fore-legs appear'd;
His brawny thighs turn'd hind-legs on his seat
Whereon his metamorphos'd form was rear'd;
And, to complete the quadruped, out-sprouted
A short tail from his rump with plenteous hair about it.

LXVII.

He sat not long, so transmew'd, on his chair,
But, lighting on the carpet-cover'd floor,
Scudded as swift as lightning down the stair,
On his four bestial legs, to gain the door:
'Hollo!' cried boy and groom, 'A hare! a hare!'
As flew he from the house their eyes before:
'Hollo! let loose on puss the fleet grey-hound!'
Was bawl'd in Thirdpart's court from one to t'other round.

LXVIII.

Unkennel'd in a twink was fleet grey-hound,
And after puss commenc'd the keen pursuit;
O'er plough'd, o'er sown, o'er green, o'er fallow ground,
With lev'ret craft, and wile of weary foot,
With skip and scud and ditch-o'erleaping bound,
The wizard ran in guise of hairy brute,
While snuffing out with sapient nose his track,
Came yelling at his heels all Thirdpart's clam'rous pack.

LXIX.

Eastward they scour'd, out-scampering the gale,
Long-winded dog and pursy panting hare,
Till, taking refuge in the streets of Crail,
Sir MICHAEL plung'd him in a jaw-hole there,
And left, without, his foes with wagging tail
Worrying the sky with bark of loud despair,
As he, secure, was fain to slink and cuddle
Encav'd beneath the street within his miry puddle.

LXX.

There let us leave the knight to cuddle fain,
And long-tongued dog to volley out his yell,
And turn we to the banquet-hall again,
Where MICHAEL'S metamorphosis befell:
No sooner saw the squire that not in vain
The staff had lighted, but succeeded well,
Than, bounding up to where jilt SUSAN sat,
On her fair nose's bridge he brought a gentle pat.

LXXI.

A second miracle ensues; for lo!
That nose, her countenance's pride and grace,
Grows out, and shoots, and lengthens at the blow,
Ridiculously sprouting from her face,
And aye it swells and beetles moe and moe,
Tap'ring to such a length its queer disgrace,
That dips its point at last amid the broth,
That near her lies in dish upon the table-cloth.

LXXII.

Nor did her aspect only suffer shame;
For, in proportion as extends her nose,
Her shoulders, late so beautiful of frame,
Into a hump up-heaving, hugely rose,
Most mountainous and high, as ill became
Fair bride array'd in sumptuous wedding clothes;
Her very gown was burst and riven through
With the large fleshy swell, so strangely big it grew!

LXXIII.

Then shook the room with laughter's frequent crack,
As saw the guests each droll excrescence rise;
One pointed to her still up-heaving back,
One to her nose's still-enlarging size;
'Ha! ha!' from every squire's throat loudly brake,
'Te-hee!' each lady chuckles and replies;
'Heav'ns, what a hideous nose!' cried every dame;
'Heav'ns, what a hideous hump!' did every laird exclaim.*

LXXIV.

Such was the punishment which silly SUE
From her resentful much-wrong'd lover bore;
And so was sour Sir MICHAEL punish'd too,
For caneing honest MELVIL from her door:
Wherefore, as now the work of vengeance due
Was finish'd, CHARLIE left her chamber-floor,
And turn'd his face, rejoicing, towards home,
Mutt'ring his grateful thanks to little elfin Tom."

CANTO VI.

I.

OH that my noddle were a seething kettle,
Frothing with bombast o'er the Muses' fire!
Oh that my wit were sharper than a nettle!
Oh that with shrill swan-guts were strung my lyre!
So would I rant and sing with such a mettle,
That each old wife in Fife's full-peopled shire
Should Maenad-like, spring from her spinning wheel,
And frolic round her bard, and wince a tott'ring reel.

II.

Scarce had the victor ceas'd his hindmost clause,
When from th'immensity of folk afar,
Rose such a hideous shout of loud applause,
As ever stunn'd with outcry sun or star;
Each tongue grew riotous within its jaws,
Clacking an acclamation popular;
Hands, high o'erhead uplifted, round and round,
Struck plausive palm on palm, and clapt a rattling sound.

* Wieland gives to one of his fairy tales a catastrophe somewhat similar, if I recollect right, to the above.

III.

And twice ten thousand hats, aloft upthrown
In black ascension, blot heav'n's blue serene,
O'ercanopying ANSTER'S crowded Loan
With crown and rim, as with a dusky screen;
And bonnets broad, and caps of sharp'ning cone,
Afloat 'twixt earth and firmament are seen,
And lasses' cowls, and hoods, uptost on high,
Encroach with tawdry clout upon the clouds of sky.

IV.

As when a troop of locusts, famine-pin'd,
From Edom's unblest monster-breeding womb,
Sail on the hot wings of the southern wind,
Wriggling aloft their sky-hung mass of gloom;
And where El Sham's clear golden riv'lets wind,
Through her gay gardens distributing bloom,
They light, and spread their devastation round,
Bepainting black as pitch the green luxuriant ground.

V.

Just such a darkness mounts into the sky,
Of hat and hood, of bonnet and of cap,
So thick, that those who swing them up on high
Below i'the shade are heard to shout and clap;
For still the folk applaud it lustily,
And pain their tingling palms with noisy rap,
Expressing thus, with deaf'ning acclamation,
Of ROBERT'S merry tale their hearty approbation.

VI.

Nor sits the Monarch idle to th'acclaim;
But, rising up majestic from his chair,
With kingly praise augments the victor's fame,
And clapping, grinds between his palms the air:
Then seizes he the fingers of the dame,
And, gently raising from her seat the fair,
He, as the sign and seal of marriage-band,
Slips into ROBERT'S grasp his MAGGIE'S tender hand.

VII.

He bade his choir of trumpeters apply
To mouth their hollow instruments of sound,
And, in an unison of clangour high,
Publish the marriage to the world around:
The fellows blew it to the peak of sky,
And sky sent down again the loud rebound:
Earth did to heav'n's high top the news up-throw,
And heav'n re-bruited back th'alarum down below.

VIII.

But now the beam-hair'd coursers of the sun,
All-smoking with their fiery hot fatigue,
Their task of charioting had pranc'd and run,
And hurl'd in sea their hissing golden gig:
Their unshorn driver had but just begun
Beyond the isle of Bute the wave to swig;
And, twinkling o'er Auld Reekie's smoke afar,
Peep'd through heav'n's mantle blue the modest evening star.

IX.

And soon the Moon in hood of silver drest,
All glistering and gladsome as may be,
Forth from her glorious casement in the east
Look'd laughing down upon both land and sea;
And on the bosom of the dark'ning west
Her pearly radiance shot rejoicingly:
Also the heads of all that fill the Loan
Wax'd yellow with the rays that on them streaming shone.

X.

Wherefore, as now the damp nocturnal air
Began to dribble down its chilly dew,
And as, of all the business of the Fair,
Nought now remain'd upon the green to do;
The herald, from beside the monarch's chair,
Abroad the signal of dispersion blew,
That the wide multitude, dispread around,
Should now break up its mass, and leave the nighted ground.

XI

Which heard, the congregated folk upbroke
With loud disruption their diffusion vast,
And, split and shoaling off in many a flock,
With homeward squeeze they turbulently past:

Beneath their feet the pillar'd earth did rock,
As up to Jove a dusty cloud they cast,
That blear'd the bright eyes of Night's glimm'ring queen,
And chok'd the brilliant stars, and dimm'd their twinkling sheen.

XII.

And such the clutter was, when shoal from shoal
With violent impulse was torn and riv'n,
As when the vaulting ice, that floors the pole,
Touch'd by the fiery shafts of warming heav'n,
Splits into fractur'd isles, that crash and roll
Diverse, athwart the molten ocean driv'n;
The Greenland boatman hears the noise afar,
And blesses for its heat day's winter-routing star.

XIII.

So loudly rush'd from ANSTER's cumber'd Loan,
The burdenous and bustling multitude,
Kicking th'o'ertrampled earth they trod upon
With saucy heel in their impetuous mood;
Some to their tents of blanket jump'd anon,
That on the fields and crofts adjoining stood;
Some to their booths and houses in the town,
Hie hot with huddling haste, and hop and hurry down.

XIV.

Meanwhile, the King, as now sufficient space
Was for his passage clear'd about the mound,
Descended from his lofty honour'd place,
Where sat he mid his gallant courtiers round:
Close at his right hand downward walk'd with grace,
The well-earn'd prize, bright MAGGIE the renown'd;
While the great victor, at his other side,
Attended blythe and brisk, exulting in his bride.

XV.

On their brave nags their persons up they swing,
And to the borough gently jogging ride,
Hemm'd thick around with an illustrious ring
Of gay Court-ladies, trooping side by side,
And Lords, whose coats with gold-lace spangl'd, fling
Back on th'abashed Moon her beamy pride,
And jolly Knights, and booted Esquires stout,
And burghers, clowns, and boys, a noisy rabble-rout.

XVI.

As downward to the town they tramp and trot,
The mingled peals of gratulation rise;
For on their catlings, fiddlesticks, I wot,
Bicker'd and skipt in funny furious wise,
And trumpet rear'd again its solemn note
Sonorously, assailant on the skies,
Full loudly lifting in a jocund tune,
The name of RANTER ROB up to the man i'the moon.

XVII.

And sounding cymbals clink and ring sublime,
Clash'd overhead in lofty unison;
And fife and flute in merry whistle chime,
Soothing the lulled ear with dulcet tone;
While aye the bass-drum, at his proper time,
Swallows the music with his sudden groan;
Till drum, flute, cymbal, trumpet, all are drown'd
In shouts, that pealing rise from the mad mob around.

XVIII.

Thus rode the train, as if in triumph down,
Exulting, through the night's moon-gilded shade,
Till reaching MAGGIE's quarter of the town,
Stops at her house the splendid cavalcade.
(For be it now, my good co-townsmen, known,
That in th'East-green's best house fair MAGGIE staid,
Near where St Ayle's small lodge in modern day
Admits to mystic rites her bousy masons gay.)

XIX.

At MAGGIE's door they stopp'd; when, lighting there,
The bridegroom brisk, and jolly-minded King,
And showy Nobleman, and Lady fair,
From pad and saddle on the causey spring,
And, passing in due order up her stair,
The good landlady to her chamber bring,
A pomp of rare attendance brave and bright,
With sweetly-biting jest, and joke of dear delight.

XX.

In her torch-brighten'd chamber down they sate
Upon her chairs, jocundly one and all,
And exercise their tongues in social prate,
Till MAGGIE's cooks and JAMES's seneschal
May well prepare and range each supper plate
On her long table in her dining-hall:—
There let us leave a while, King, Lord, and Lady,
And saunter through the town till supper's fare be ready

XXI.

Heav'ns! how from street to street the people reel,
As if they knew not where to rush for joy!
How rocks the causey with incessant heel
Of hurrying man, and wife, and maid, and boy!
From lane and wynd the sounds of gladness peal,
Hitting the stars with clamorous annoy;
As all the houses' walls and roofs are bright
With bonfire's yellow glow, and candles' gentler light.

XXII.

For in each window's every pane is seen,
Stuck into fitly-fashion'd wood or clay,
A tallow candle flinging forth its sheen,
T'augment th'illumination's grand display;
How flame the houses with a lustre keen,
In emulation of the sun-bright day!
Ev'n the poor old-wife's backroom-window glows,
Gilding the good green kail that underneath it grows.

XXIII.

While in each well-paved street and alley strait,
And at the Cross, and up along the Loan,
Their spiry curls huge bonfires elevate,
Cracking with heat the ground and causey-stone;
For ev'ry bonfire was a cart-load great
Of Dysart coal, that redly flash'd and shone,
Emblazing with its tongues of flame so bright,
The dusk and smutty brow of star-bestudded night.

XXIV.

And, gawntress'd round each ruddy fire about,
Hogsheads of porter and of cheery ale,
Forth from their little gurgling bung-holes spout
Their genial streams in tankard, pot, and pail:
Oh 'twas a wild notorious guzzling-bout!
That night no throat was narrow, or was frail,
But, in long draughts delicious, swallow'd down
The barley's mantling cream, and bev'rage stout and brown.

XXV.

(Not from thy brew-house's well-barrell'd store,
Oh ROGER! comes a drink of stronger proof,
Though foams thy hearty ale the tankard o'er,
And sends its cork a-thund'ring to the roof:
Ev'n ancient men, whose hairs were thin and hoar,
Then staid not from the fuddle's fun aloof,
But drank till every head was giddy turning,
And to their reeling eyes each fire in sky seem'd burning.

XXVI.

Yet not all night each brisk warm-blooded boy,
Sat drinking with his sweetheart blythe and boon;
They on the Loan, in many a reel, employ
Their bouncing bodies wriggling to the moon,
And almost wince away their heels for joy,
Tossing and riving their dance-bursten shoon,
Whilst, ever and anon, or ere she wist,
Smack by her partner dear each bonny lass was kiss'd.

XXVII.

Such out of doors was the disport and bouse;
But higher was the pitch of joy within;
That night was ANSTER's every barn and house
Converted into tippling-shop and inn;
Garrets and bed-rooms reek with hot carouse,
And steaming punch of whisky and of gin;
The kitchen fires are crowded round and round
With rings of lively lads, that swig their bowls profound.

XXVIII.

Hey! how their glasses jingle merrily!
How rings the table with their revel-roar!
How, as they toast their MAG with three times three,
Sounds with loud heel the vex'd tormented floor!

They sing, they clap, they laugh with honest glee;
Were never seen such merry men heretofore!
Through window glass and stony wall bursts out
Abroad on night's dull ear the wassail's frequent shout.

XXIX.

But now, in MAGGIE'S tapestry-deck'd hall,
Serv'd is the sumptuous marriage-supper up,
And clean neat-handed cook and seneschal
Hath set each mess, and dish, and plate, and cup;
So down in seemly order sit they all,
With stomachs stiff and resolute to sup,
And set their griding forks and knives to work,
On turkey, goose, and hen, cold veal, and cheek of pork.

XXX.

Behoves it not my bardship to relate
What various viands burden'd MAGGIE'S board;
What lay on this, and what on t'other plate,
What Lady first was help'd, and by what Lord,
What mess the King, and what the others ate:
That would be tedious trifling, 'pon my word;
I will not do't, though I could tell, in sooth,
How oft each fork was rais'd to every munching mouth.

XXXI.

Suffice it, good my townsmen, that ye know,
That there fastidious teeth found pleasant food,
That all the cates that kingly banquets show
Were spread before them, fragrant, rich, and good;
And that, though some ate less and some ate moe,
Each ate as much, be certain, as he could;
Till, tir'd at last of piddling with their gums,
They eas'd of knife and fork their fingers and their thumbs.

XXXII.

But when the sound of teeth had ceas'd i'the hall,
And fork and knife lay idle on their plate,
And guest and hostess, backward leaning all,
Their picktooths now were plying, saturate,
Up from his seat arose the bridegroom tall,
Where to his blooming spouse oppos'd he sate,
And, e'er the table-cloth was ta'en away,
He turn'd him to the King, and thus addrest his say:—

XXXIII.

"Think not, my Liege, that fortune or that chance
To-day hath made me in my conquest blest,
Impelling me by casual circumstance,
To jump without a warrant like the rest;
'Twas not alone with Heav'n's high sufferance,
I put my jumping-prowess to the test;
'Twas by its order I in sack was bound;
'Twas with its favour too that I my bride have found.

XXXIV.

Nor deem that some dumb beldam, Satan's tool,
Or wily witch, or second-sighted seer,
Hath, oracling, deceiv'd me like a fool,
To think I to supernal Pow'r am dear;
No, Monarch; by the cowl of old St Rule!
I heard the order with no proxy ear,
And with my own true eye unfalsified,
I ev'n upon my chair the goodly vision spied:

XXXV.

For, on an evening in December last,
('Twas just the evening of that day, whereon
The stout-lung'd criers through the Border past,
Proclaiming what should hap in ANSTER Loan,)
As down to supper's sober cool repast
I sat me in my dining-room alone,
Musing upon the late heard news so odd,
Blown from the trump of fame and crier's throat abroad.

XXXVI.

I happen'd in my fingers up to take
The pepper-box, where lurk'd my spicy stores,
And held it o'er my plate, intent to shake
The fragrant atoms from its little bores,
When, as my hand inverted it, there brake
Out from the tin lid's perforated pores,
A stream of beauteous smoke, that, like a mist,
Curl'd its delicious wreaths around my shaded fist.

XXXVII.

Astonish'd at the prodigy, I threw
The steaming box upon the table-cloth,
When, more with miracle t'amaze my view,
It frisk'd and trotted mid the plates i' troth,
And ceas'd not from its num'rous holes to spue
Its incense white as flakes of ocean froth,
Up-sending to the ceiling of the room
Its supernat'ral flux of pure and fragrant fume.

XXXVIII.

I sat and gaz'd—not long; when, strange to say,
Forth from that reeky pillar's paly base,
Started at once a little female fay,
Giggling and blythely laughing in my face:
Her height was as the lily, that in May
Lifts to the sun her head's envermeil'd grace;
Her beauty as the rays of various glow,
That glorify the length of heav'n's sea-drinking bow.

XXXIX.

The gown in which her elf-ship was array'd,
Like to the peacock's painted feather shined,
And on the table-cloth redundant spread
Its lustrous train for half a foot behind;
Over her breast her purple-striped plaid
Lay floating loose and thin as woven wind;
And gorgeous was her head-dress, as the hue
Of Iris-flower, that spreads her velvet petals blue.

XL.

Deck'd was her neck's circumference with row
Of diamonds, strung on thread in costly band,
Small pearly berries that are wont to grow
Upon the bushes of old Fairyland;
And in each diamond's orb so fair in show,
My candle's image burning seem'd to stand,
That her white slender neck was all in gleam,
Doubly impearled thus with light's reflected beam.

XLI.

And pendant from her neck, by golden thread,
A little dangling silver lute I saw,
Of fashion rare, and quaintly polished,
Not thicker than a pipe of oaten straw:
She laugh'd and nodded courteously her head,
Belike to clear away my doubt and awe,
For, sooth to say, I was not unafear'd,
When from my pepper-box good lady fay appear'd.

XLII.

She dropt a curtsey, reverently low,
And thus bespoke in clear and mellow voice;
'Twas sweeter than the chiming winds that blow
Upon the Æolian harp a whiffled noise:—
'Excuse me, good your worship! that I so
With my quaint presence mar your supper's joys;
I have some little matter to impart;
'Twill not detain you long.—Nay, ROBERT, do not start:

XLIII.

Compose thee, Squire, and calmly give thine ear
To what shall from my gentle mouth proceed,
For mickle shall it profit thee to hear,
And prize aright the value of my rede;
And be assur'd thy person, ROB, is dear
To the slim creatures of the fairy breed,
That thus I peer from out my box of spice,
To tender, for thy weal, my uncompell'd advice:

XLIV.

Hast thou not heard the wond'rous news to-day,
Through all the marches of the Border blown,
Of sports, and games, and celebrations gay,
Promulgate to be held in ANSTER Loan,
And that a maid the victor's toils shall pay,
A maid, whose beauty is excell'd by none!
Thou hast—and I surprised thee deep in muse,
A-pond'ring on th'import of such amazing news:

XLV.

Go, when o'er Cockraw peeps light's golden horn,
And seek a supple ass whereon to ride;
Go, seek a long sack, sturdy and untorn,
Wherein to jump with drolly-trammel'd stride;

Go, seek a bagpipe whose wind-pouch unworn,
May well the wrath of prison'd breath abide;
Go, set thy brain to work like vat of ale,
And skim thou off for MAG some smart ingenious tale.

XLVI.

And know, when at the Loan is tried thy skill,
Thy ass I'll nettle on with spur unseen;
Into thy bones and sinews I'll instil
Great vigour to o'erjump the quaking green;
Thy bagpipe's pouch with tempest I will fill,
Lending thy tune a witchery not mean;
And from thy study-rack'd perplexed brains,
A merry tale I'll squeeze, the helpmate of thy pains.

XLVII.

So shalt thou, Squire, in Scotland's view be crown'd
Upon the spot with victory and fame,
And ride a happy bridegroom from the ground,
Elate and glorying in thy peerless dame:
Yet when thy toil's transcendant prize is found,
And marriage revelries thy joy proclaim,
I charge thee, as my aid shall make thee blest,
Forget not what I now, as to my box, request:

XLVIII.

This box—this pepper-box—this homely shrine,
Wherein confin'd by wizard spell I stay,
Must be transported in a pouch of thine,
When thou to ANSTER Loan dost take thy way;
And when thou down to marriage feast and wine
Shalt sit, in MAGGIE'S hall, a bridegroom gay,
Then from thy pocket draw it in a trice,
And on the table-cloth lay down the box of spice.

XLIX.

Ask not the purport of my odd behest;
'Twill be unriddl'd in the proper place;
'Tis thine t'effect the task, and leave the rest
To Madam Puck's good complaisance and grace.'—
Here Madam Puck her piping voice supprest,
And, with a sweet smile on her little face,
Rear'd up the small lute in her lily fist,
And with her rose-red lip its furbish'd silver kiss'd.

L.

She play'd a tune so delicate and sweet,
So overpow'ring with its ravishment,
That sit I could no longer on my seat,
But up and cap'ring o'er my chamber went,
As if within the soles of both my feet,
A store of frisky Mercury was pent
(And, by the bye, 'twas just the tune with which
My bagpipe did to-day your reeling Loan bewitch).

LI.

At length she ceas'd, and in a stroke o'the eye
Delv'd down within her jail of tin again,
And in her stead left curling bonnily
A smoke whose odour ravish'd nose and brain—
No more, my gracious Liege—what need have I
Longer to talk, where talking would be vain?—
Behold—what Mrs Puck commanded me—
'Tis but a sorry thing—the pepper-box—d'ye see?"

LII.

Thus speaking, from the pocket of his coat,
Wherein he had convey'd it to our town,
The goblin-haunted pepper-box he brought,
And, laughing, set it on the table down;
Great laughter crackled in the Monarch's throat,
As on the cloth he saw the tin y-thrown;
And giggling guest 'gan fling his jeers and jokes
Upon the paltry frame of ROB'S poor pepper-box.

LIII.

But soon was changed their blythe to fearful mood,
When strait, afore each half-mistrusting eye,
The bawbling box of pepper, where it stood,
Began again to dance spontaneously,
And fidg'd and frisk'd, in strange inquietude,
Among the plates that thickly-ranged lie,
Directing to the table's middle part
Its motion by the side of broken pie and tart.

LIV.

Yet to a greater pitch their wonder grew,
When, at the table's other end, they spy
Fair MAGGIE'S mustard-pot commencing too
To gambol and to fidge in sympathy
(The self-same pot, whence burst to MAGGIE'S view,
Of late Tom Puck, with brightly-breeched thigh);
As would a hen leap on a fire-hot griddle,
So leap'd the mustard-pot toward the table's middle.

LV.

Short while they flirted, pepper-box and pot,
Most laughable, yet fearful to be view'd,
Till, meeting on the table's midmost spot,
Stock-still th'ignoble bouncing vessels stood,
And from their little cells, where lay the hot
Ground pepper, and the biting mustard good,
Were in a moment seen at once to break
Two parallel white shafts of silv'ry spouting reek.

LVI.

Ascending curl'd, not long, each sep'rate fume,
Up-throwing to the roof its preciousness,
When with a fire-flash that emblaz'd the room,
Burst from the hollow mustard-pot's recess
Good Tommy Puck, the fay of roseate bloom,
Clad in his custom'd gaudery of dress;
And, with a second gleam of flashy light,
Sprung from the spicy-box good Madam Puck to sight.

LVII.

With faces to each other turn'd they rise,
Scarce sunder'd by a finger's length of space,
And, in an instant, as they recognise,
With glimpse of quick eye, each the other's face,
They fall, as if o'ercome with sweet surprise,
On one another's necks in close embrace,
Like friends that, having long liv'd far apart,
Meet and relieve in tears the joy-o'erburden'd heart.

LVIII.

Astonishment his whitely ensign shows
On each spectator's visage at the sight;
Courtier and King, that sat to table close,
Slily push'd back their chairs, confounded quite;
The ladies hid their faces in their clothes,
Or underneath the table slunk for fright;
Save MAG and ROB, who laugh'd to see once more,
The tricksy kindly ouphes that hail'd them heretofore.

LIX.

Awhile the pair of pigmies on the spot,
Lock'd their fantastic persons jole to jole,
And, as two doves of plumy-varnish'd throat
Sit billing in their dove-cot's nested hole,
Their liquid wee lips twitter'd kisses hot
In fond commutuality of soul;
It was a treat to see how sweetheart-like
Their fiery fairy mouths the dear collision strike!

LX.

At length, as rapture's first excess was past,
They disentangle their endear'd embrace,
And, tow'rd the King and guests that sat aghast,
Turn'd round each minim prettiness of face;
Dame Puck, to MAG and those beside her plac'd,
Let fall a curtsey with a courtly grace;
Tom, fronting JAMES, took hat from off his brow,
And curv'd his goblin back into a goodly bow.

LXI.

A glance upon the company he shot,
And smil'd on MAG that sat at head o'the board,
Then from his silly dulcet-piping throat
Sweet utterance of word-clad breath he pour'd:—
"Oh Monarch! let amazement seize thee not;
Be of good cheer, each dame and noble Lord!
Ungown your timid faces, all ye fair!
Draw ye to table close, each gentleman your chair!

LXII.

For do not think that in us twain you spy
Two spirits of the perter wicked sort,
That, buzzing on bad errand through the sky,
In pranks of molestation take their sport,

Confounding old-wives' churns, and slipping sly
Their stools from underneath them to their hurt,
Or chucking young sweet maids below the chin,
That so they bite the tongue their tender mouths within.

LXIII.

Of kindlier hearts are Tommy and his spouse,
Aidant to some, benevolent to all;
For oft we sweep the thrifty matron's house
With besom quaint, invisible, and small,
Oft from her cheese and butter chase the mouse,
Preyless, into the cavern of his wall,
And oft her churn-staff gripe, that in a twink
The waves of bubbling cream to buttery masses sink.

LXIV.

But chiefly of young lovers true and kind,
The patrons and the guardians good are we,
Linking each mutual and harmonious mind
In silver cord of dear complacency;
But when the vows, that should restrain and bind,
Broke to another's misery we see,
'Tis ours to take the injur'd lover's part,
And on the perjur'd head deal out th'avenging smart.

LXV.

Witness what vengeance hit Miss Susan Scott,
Whose back and visage, for her breach of troth,
Obtain'd a penal and opprobrious blot,
Swoln out to counterpoise each other's growth;
And though, for our suggestion of that plot,
To punish her and her sour guardian both,
My wife and I hath suffer'd hard and long,
Yet, by my Monarch's beard! 'twas right t'avenge the wrong.

LXVI.

Oh we have suffer'd much!—that wizard foul
(Beshrew his meagre vile malicious ghost!)
No sooner 'scap'd from Crail's vile sewer-hole,
And took again the shape that he had lost,
Than, with his long-tail'd demons black as coal,
That whiz to serve him from hell's ev'ry coast,
Consulting in his study, soon he learn'd
Who prompted Charles to wreak the vengeance justly earn'd.

LXVII.

Then churn'd the sorcerer's mouth the surly foam;
He clench'd his fist, and swore by Beelzebub,
He forthwith should o'er half the country roam,
Beating each thicket with his oaken club,
To find out dapper intermeddling Tom
In his inhabited and secret shrub,
And heel him forth reluctant to the day,
And for his pranks chastise upon his breech the fay.

LXVIII.

His hat he put on his craft-crammed head;
He grip'd his hugy gnarl'd staff in hand,
And down his study-stair, with sounding tread,
Came spitting smoke like newly-lighted brand:
Forth from the gate he in a hurry sped,
To beat the total bushes of the land,
Cursing at every step the harmless breed
Of elfs, that aid the wrong'd in grievous time of need.

LXIX.

Need it be told? Alas! too soon he found
The bush, where with my dame I sleeping lay;
Too soon his cudgel, thrashing round and round,
Graz'd our slim bodies in its dang'rous play;
And, had not Ob'ron sav'd us both from wound,
Our brains had fairly been dash'd out that day;
We woke—we shriek'd—his rugged hand he stretch'd,
And from our leafy bed us by the heels he fetch'd.

LXX.

His long-nail'd hairy fingers, grasping tight
Our waists, uprear'd us to his bearded chin,
And held us there in melancholy plight,
Wriggling our innocent frail members thin:
He spat upon our faces with despite,
Glooming his phiz into a joyful grin;
Then, lowering down, he plung'd us ere we wot,
Each int'a sep'rate pouch of his great clumsy coat.

LXXI.

There lay we button'd in, and closely pent
In a dark dungeon of detested cloth,
As, tracing back his steps, he homeward went,
And to his chamber bore us dangling both;
He drew us forth, the wicked churl, intent
On base revenge, malevolent and wroth,
And with unseemly usage treated each,
And slapp'd with scurvy palm my little harmless breech.

LXXII.

Then did he in his wickedness begin
To practise his detestable device;
He took a paltry pepper-box of tin,
And, hoisting up my consort in a trice,
He push'd her weeping ladyship within,
Clean through the lid amid the pungent spice
(For fairy shapes can be contracted so
As through a needle's eye right easily to go):

LXXIII.

He push'd her shrieking down into the cell,
With cruel taunt and mocking devilish,
And mutter'd o'er her a confining spell
Of hell's abhorr'd and uncouth gibberish:—
'*Lie there, Dame Puck!*' he cried, '*and bed thee well*
In the snug durance of thy penal dish;
There be a tenant till the day shall come
Ordain'd t'enfranchise thee from thy ignoble tomb!'

LXXIV.

A sorry mustard-pot then took the Knight,
And, 'tween his fingers lifting me sublime,
He push'd and plung'd me, yelling with affright,
Amid the mustard's yellow sloughy slime;
And, '*Lie thou there,*' he cried, '*thou meddling sprite:*
And do the proper penance for thy crime;
There be a tenant till the day shall come
Ordain'd t'enfranchise thee from thy ignoble tomb!

LXXV.

Nor meet Tom Puck and Madam Puck agen,
Until the fairest maid of Scottish land
Shall to the supplest of all Scotland's men,
Charm'd by his jumping, give her bed and hand.'
This said, he mumbled o'er me in my den
His damned spell too hard to understand,
Of virtue to impound, and cage me there,
Ev'n till the day foredoom'd to let me loose to air.

LXXVI.

And further, he, to sunder us the more,
And interpose large space between us twain,
To Melrose Abbey journeying, with him bore
The spicy jail, where lay my spouse in pain,
And gave it to the monks, skill'd deep in lore,
That in their charge it might for years remain,
To grace the abbey-table, and supply
Their kail on feasting-days with pepper hot and dry.

LXXVII.

And there, methinks, for ages it has been;
Till, as roll'd onward Time's fulfilling round,
By the wise care of our fair fairy-queen,
To Rob the Ranter's house the way it found,
Where, from her box upstarting to his eyne
(The spell that moment lost its power t'impound),
My wife bade Scotland's supplest man prepare,
All for her weal and his, to jump at Anster Fair.

LXXVIII.

For me—when first that stern felonious Knight,
Had dungeon'd me in penal-pot so fast,
My jail he did commit that very night
To Pittenweem's fat monks of belly vast,
That from its small profundity they might
Supply with mustard every rich repast,
And in the abbey-pantry guard the cell,
Where I, alas! was doom'd for many an age to dwell.

LXXIX.

And there I dwelt in dolesome house of clay,
Far sunder'd from my wife in sad divorce;
Till onward drew the freedom-giving day,
Fix'd and appointed in Time's fatal course,

When Oberon, the silver-scepter'd fay,
That rules his phantom-tribes with gentle force,
My mustard-pot by secret means convey'd
To Maggie's house—the house of Scotland's fairest maid.

LXXX.

Here, as one night upon her supper-board,
Imbogg'd amid my biting mire I lay,
My king a moment broke the spell abhorr'd,
That kept me pent and pester'd night and day:
I rose, I loos'd my tongue to mortal word,
Commanding her to publish sans delay,
The merry games effectual to decide
What supplest-sinew'd Scot should gain her for his bride

LXXXI.

Abroad the games were blown o'er Scottish ground,
And hurried thousands in to Anster Fair:
The work is done—the supplest man is found;
He sits the Bridegroom and the Landlord there;
The fairest Maid of all the realm around
Sits yonder, star-like shining on her chair—
The happiest couple they of all beside:
God bless you richly both, fair Bridegroom and fair Bride!

LXXXII.

Nor think, my wedded dears! that you alone
By Anster's gamesome Fair are render'd blest;
We, too, that have so long with mutual moan
In torment and divorcement liv'd distrest,
Meet now again (great thanks to Oberon!)
Re-wedded, re-possessing, re-possess'd,
A pair of happy fays conjoin'd for ever,
Whom henceforth wizard's hate shall have no might to sever.

LXXXIII.

And now, my Lord, oh King! we must away
To taste the sweets of new-found liberty,
To ride astraddle on the lunar ray
In airy gallop to the top of sky,
And lave our limber limbs, and plash and play
Amid the milk that dims the galaxy:
Farewell!—may joys be rain'd on each of you!
Adieu, thou Bridegroom sweet! thou bonny Bride, adieu!"

LXXXIV.

This having said, he on his shiny hair
Did gracefully his silver'd hat replace,
And seizing by the hand his lady fair,
A while look'd smerking, winking, in her face;
Then swift as spark from fire, or beam from star,
That unsubstantial, slim, frail, fairy-brace,
From table heaving off their phantasms small,
Sheer through the window flew of Maggie's dining-hall.

LXXXV.

Sheer through the window fleetly flew the twain,
Mocking the eye that tried to follow them;
Yet, strange to add! nor wood nor glassy pane
Was injur'd of the fay-pierc'd window frame—
Amazement ran in every beating vein
Of Bride, and Groom, and King, and Lord, and Dame,
As they beheld the coupled goblins fly
Through window-shut and glass abroad into the sky

LXXXVI.

Recover'd quickly of their short surprise,
They drew to table nearer each his chair;
"A bumper fill," the sportive Monarch cries,
"To Tom and Lady Puck, the elfin pair!"
Landlord and guest his brimming glass supplies
From bottle with the dainty vine-blood rare;
Clean to the dregs their glasses drink they all,
As "Tom and Mrs Puck!" sound echoing through the hall.

LXXXVII.

Thus they the social happy minutes spend
In wine, and chat, and harmless revelry,
Till slow began the round moon to descend
Down the starr'd ladder of the western sky,
And sleep, that toil-worn man's frail frame must mend,
His spunge's balsam wrung on human eye;
From table, then, withdrew to sleeping room,
Courtier, and King, and Dame, and Bride, and glad Bridegroom.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE WINTER DAY.

ADDRESSED TO R. S——, ESQ.

Now Jove in flaky snow descends;
A sounding storm the welkin rends;
Fountains and pools are all congeal'd,
And frost doth bristle hill and field;
Then, boy, with fuel heap the hearth,
Excite th'illumin'd room to mirth,
Spread on the board the smoking feast,
And from the wine-crypt bring the best.

See, see! how spatter'd thick and white,
The snow up-chokes the window's light;
Glass panes within are bright embost,
With pretty forests carv'd by frost:
And, hark! how o'er the chimney raves
The wind let loose from Norway's caves,
Scowling, as if with anger mad,
That we within should be so glad.

Come, come, my friend, and leave a while
Day's soul-absorbing endless toil;
Within, without, each sight invites
T'enjoy the chamber's boon delights;
The candles on the table glow,
The damask cloth outshines the snow;
Cup, wine-glass, platter, all are bright,
The very chairs shine out with light.

Without, the tempest lords it high,
As if his own were all the sky;
The snow-fraught clouds, low-hung and black,
O'er-scud the world with rapid rack;
Scarce in the streets a shiv'ring wight
Is seen, with nose all blue and white;
Scarce in the fields may Robin find
A refuge from the drift and wind.

Then come, my friend, and as thy part,
Bring to my feast a jocund heart—
A soul dispos'd to join with me,
In talk of dear philosophy;
No slanders shall our speech pollute,
No noise, no long and proud dispute,
Such as fall out in faction's brawls—
Where wisdom muses, folly bawls.

Away with these, but in their stead,
Be our discourse of sages dead,
And how their wisdom hath refin'd,
And crown'd with god-like grace mankind;
Themes talk'd of many years agone
By Solon or by Solomon—
Themes wherewith Plato, at his feasts,
Made jovial, ev'n as Jove's, his guests.

But should it hap to be our mood,
T'alight from wisdom's altitude,
Why, we can childish-sportful be;
Who have so good a right as we?
Though learn'd and grave, at times we can
Keep up the glee with any man,
Nay—none alive I know or see
Can nonsense talk like you and me!

SONG—MINNIE TO HER SPINNIN'-WHEEL.

Imitated from the German of Burger.

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!
Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!
The roofs and wa's are dash't wi' rain;
The wind doth gowl at ilka pane;
But here I sit fu' warm and dry,
And care na for the blasts out-by,
Aye birrin' at my spinnin'-wheel!

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!
Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!
Hey, how the towslet tow comes down!
Hey, how the wheel rins roun' and roun'!
How merrily, hey, the tirlin' pirn
Snaps wi' its iron teeth the yairn,
Aye followin' fast the birrin' wheel!

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!
Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!
Kate's bridal day will soon be here,
And she maun hae her pairt o' gear;
The weaver's hands are toom o' wark,
He's crying loud for sheet or sark,
And flytes you, lazy spinnin'-wheel!

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!
Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!
Haud aff, ye bairns, touch nae the rock,
Play farrer aff, wee Jean and Jock;
For Minnie is taskit, and set to hae
A braw linen wab ere sweet May-day,
Wi' birrin' at her spinnin'-wheel!

Birr on, birr on, my spinnin'-wheel!
Spin on, spin on, my birrin' wheel!
The roofs and wa's are dash'd wi' rain;
The wind doth gowl at ilka pane;
But here I sit fu' warm and dry,
And care na for the blasts out-by,
Aye birrin' at my spinnin'-wheel!

ODE TO PEACE.

1814.

Daughter of God! that sits on high
Amid the dances of the sky,
And guidest with thy gentle sway
The planets on their tuneful way;
Sweet PEACE! shall ne'er again
The smile of thy most holy face,
From thine etherial dwelling-place,
Rejoice the wretched weary race
Of discord-breathing men?

Too long, oh gladness-giving Queen!
Thy tarrying in heav'n has been;
Too long o'er this fair blooming world
The flag of blood has been unfurl'd,
Polluting God's pure day;
Whilst, as each madd'ning people reels,
War onward drives his scythed wheels,
And at his horse's bloody heels
Shriek Murder and Dismay!

Oft have I wept to hear the cry
Of widow wailing bitterly;
To see the parent's silent tear
For children fall'n beneath the spear;
And I have felt so sore
The sense of human guilt and woe,
That I, in Virtue's passion'd glow,
Have cursed (my soul was wounded so)
The shape of man I bore!

Then come from thy serene abode,
Thou gladness-giving Child of God!
And cease the world's ensanguin'd strife,
And reconcile my soul to life;
For much I long to see,
Ere to the grave I down descend,
Thy hand her blessed branch extend,
And to the world's remotest end
Wave Love and Harmony!

ON MY MOTHER'S DECEASE,

NOVEMBER 1831.

My mother dead! what weight of grief
Lies in these little words to me!
Again, again, I am a child,
And fond affection's tears flow free!
Back, back, into my school-boy days,
Rushes my eager memory,
And stirreth up the various scenes
A mother's love endear'd to me.

Again I see her anxious look,
When childhood's sorrows on me lay;
I hear her voice, which, full of hope,
Sooth'd all these childish ails away;
Each word she spoke, each kindly deed
That from her fond hand flutt'ring came,
All rise afresh to sanctify,
Still more a mother's sacred name.

When from on high affliction came,
And fill'd my father's house with tears,
For her alone I felt—for her
My unconfessing soul had fears;
When joy came like an angel down,
To wipe the sorrows God had giv'n,
'Twas for her sake alone I bless'd
That gladness which came down from Heav'n.

Alas! from day to day I saw
Her feeble frame grow feeble more,
Whilst winter, that to youth gives joy,
His deadly gripe lay on her sore.
I mark'd her tott'ring step—I tried
Kindly to chide her into glee;
Yet scarce at bed-time could her lips
Utter the old "Good-night" to me.

At last the yet unwither'd bloom
That dim upon her face did lie,
Sunk, sunk at once to mortal pale;
I saw it—saw my mother die!
And, though her eye beheld me not,
Her features look'd tranquillity,
And from behind the veil of death
Sent her last blessing unto me!

Thanks, thanks, to Heav'n! my wish, my pray'r,
Hath been for many a changeful year,
That God might spare my life *for this—*
For this—a mother's heart to cheer.
And now that I have seen her age
Made glad, have seen her die in peace,
Careless and tranquil I await
The term of this my mortal race.

TO MY MOTHER'S SPINNING-WHEEL.

WRITTEN THE DAY AFTER HER DEATH—NOV. 1831.

Lo! silent now and motionless
Within the corner stands
The busy little engine, once
Mov'd by my mother's hands.
I bought it for her, low and light,
To turn in easy wise,
Thereby t'invite her aged feet,
To gentle exercise.

How gladsomely she sate her down,
Her self-set task to ply!
How lightsomely beside the hearth
Did winter evenings fly!
I question'd her of thrift, and all
Her linen-making toils,
And she inform'd my ignorance
All readily with smiles.

Idle a while the engine stood,
In autumn's jolly reign;
She chid herself for idleness,
And sought her wheel again.

She spread the flax all smooth, she warp'd
It round the distaff fair;
Alas! her hand ne'er touch'd the work—
She died, and left it there!

And now another hand must spin
The flaxen remnant out;
A foot of greater energy
Must force the wheel about.
No more my chamber with its hum,
At eve shall shaken be;
A housewife's thrift, a housewife's toils,
No more have charms for me!

Yet, little engine! though thy sound
No more shall please mine ear,
Yet ever to mine eye thou shalt
Be a memorial dear.
Ev'n for her sake that exercis'd
Her aged foot on thee,
I'll look on thee with love, and thou
Shalt never part from me!

THE TANGIERS GIANT.*

In Tangiers town, as I've been tauld,
There liv'd intill the times of auld
A giant stout and big,
The awfuest and the dourest carl
That on the outside o' this warl'
E'er wallop'd bane or leg.

When he was born, on that same day,
He was like other weans, perfay,
Nae langer than a ladle,
But in three days he shot sae lang,
That out wi's feet and head he dang
Baith end-boords o' his cradle.

And when the big-baned babe did see
How that his cradle, short and wee,
Could haud him in nae langer,
His passion took a tirrivee—
He grippit it, and garr'd it flee
To flinders, in his anger.

Ere he was spain'd, what beef, what bane,
He was a babe o' thretty stane,
And bigger than his mither;
Whan he for 's parritch grat at morn,
Men never heard syn they were born
A yowl sae fu' o' drither.

When he'd seen thretty years or sae,
Far meikler was his little tae
Than meikle Samuel's shouther;
When he down on a stool did lean,
The stool was in an instant gane,
And brizz'd clean down to pouther.

When through the streets o' Tangiers town
He gaed, spaziering up and down,
Houses and kirks did tremmle;
O' his coat-tail the vera wap
Rais'd whirlwinds wi' its flichterin' flap,
And garr'd auld lum-heads tummle.

Had ye been ten mile out o' town,
Ye might hae seen his head aboon
The highest houses towrin'.
Ilk awfu' tramp he gave the ground,
Garr'd aik-trees shake their heads a' round,
And lions rin hame cowerin'.

To shaw his pow'r unto the people,
Ance in his arms he took the steeple,
Kiss'd it, and ca'd it brither;
Syne from its bottom up it wrung,
And in the air three times it swung,
Spire, bell, and a' thegither!

And when he'd swung it merrily,
Again upon its bottom he
Did clap it down sae clever,
Except a sma' crack half-way round,
The steeple stood upon its found,
As stout and straucht as ever!

Ae king's birth-day, when he was fu',
Twa Tangier chaps began to pu'
His tails; when, on a sudden,
Ane by the richt leg up he grippit,
The tither by the neck he snippit,
And sent them skyward scuddin'.

On earth they ne'er again cam down;
Ane in a tan-pit i' the moon
Fell plump, and breath'd his last;
The tither ane was jammit ticht
'Tween twa stars o' the Pleiads bricht,
Whair yet he's sticking fast.

Ae day, when he stood near the sea,
A fleet o' Tyrian ships in glee
Was sailing gawcy by—
He gript ae frigate by the mast,
And frae the deep wi' powstie vast
He rais'd her in the sky:

And then the great ship up he tumml'd—
Her mast was down, her hulk up-whummil'd,
Her keel high i' the lift;
Captain and cargo down cam rummlin',
Marines, and men, and meat, cam tummlin'
Down frae her decks like drift.

He had a mammoth for his horse,
Whairon wi' michty birr and force
He rade baith up and down;
My certy! whan on him he lap,
For hill nor tree he didna stap—
For tower, nor yet for town.

From Calpe to the Chinese wa'
He travell'd in a day or twa;
And as he gallop't east,
The tower of Babel down he batter'd—
For five miles round its bricks were scatter'd,
Sic birr was in his beast!

But whan he cam to Ecbatan,
A terrible strabusch was than;
He soucht na street nor yett,
But hurly-burly, smash, smash, smash,
Through wa's and roofs he drave slap-dash,
Down-dundering a' he met:

What wi' his monster's thunderin' thud,
And what wi' brusch, and smusch, and scud,
O' rafters, slates, and stanes,
Ten thousand folk to dead were devell'd
Ten thousand mair were eirthlins levell'd,
Half-dead wi' fractur'd banes.

He travell'd, too, baith north and south,
Whiles for his hunger, whiles for drouth;
At Thebes* he brak his fast;
And at the far Cape o' Good Houp,
He took his denner, and a stoup
O' wine for his repast.

He tried, too, on his fearsome horse,
His way up to our Pole to force
To spy its whirlin' pin;
Up to the arctic ice-ribb'd flood
Nicherin' he cam, as he were wud,
Wi' dirdom and wi' din.

As north he rode, he didna wait
To mak a brig ower Helle's strait,
Like Persia's pridefu' king;
He loupit from Abydos' strand,
And thwack! on Sestos' beach did land,
Makin' hail Europe ring.

* For this giant of ninety feet or more, we have somewhat like classical authority. "Gabinius, the Roman historian, makes mention of the sepulchre of Antalus, near Tingi [or Tangiers], as also of a skeleton *sixty* cubits long [some better copies have *six*], which Sertorius disinterred and again covered with earth."—*Strabo lib.* 17, *cap.* 3.

* Egyptian Thebes.

As up through Thrace his beast did scour,
He kick'd up sic ane cloud o' stour
From his gambadin' hoof,
The king o' Thrace, where he in's ha',
Sat dinin' wi' his princes braw,
Was chokit wi' the stoof.

But when he reach'd Siberia's shore,
His monster wi' a grousom roar,
Down sank amang the snaw;
The beast was smor'd, and ne'er gat out;*
The rider, wi' ane damnet shout,
Sprang aff, and spreul'd awa!

His end was like his lawless life;
He challeng'd Atlas in some strife,
T'uphaud heiv'n on his head;
He tried the starry heiv'n t'uphaud—
Down cam the lift, and wi' a daud,
It smor'd the scoundrel dead!

MORAL.

From this dour giant we may see
How little, michty limb and thie,
The human race bestead;
A wee bit man wi meikle sense,
Is better than ane carle immense
Wi' nonsense in his head!

TAMMY LITTLE.

Wee Tammy Little, honest man!
I kent the body weel,
As round the kintra-side he gaed
Careerin' wi' his creel.

He was sae slender and sae wee,
That aye when blasts did blaw,
He ballasted himself wi' stanes
'Gainst bein' blawn awa.

A meikle stane the wee bit man
In ilka coat-pouch clappit,
That by the michty gowlin' wind
He michtna down be swappit.

When he did chance within a wood
On simmer days to be,
Aye he was frichtit lest the craws
Should heise him up on hie;

And aye he, wi' an aiken cud,
The air did thump and beat,
To stap the craws frae liftin' him,
Up to their nests for meat.

Ae day, when in a barn he lay,
And thrashers thrang were thair,
He in a moment vanish'd aff,
And nae man could tell whair.

They lookit till the riggin' up,
And round and round they lookit,
At last they fand him underneath
A firlot cruyled and crookit.

Ance as big Samuel past him by,
Big Samuel gave a sneese,
And wi' the sough o't he was cast
Clean down upon his knees.

His wife and he upon ane day
Did chance to disagree,
And up she took the bellowses,
As wild as wife could be;

She gave ane puff intill his face,
And made him, like a feather,
Flee frae the tae side o' the house,
Resoundin' till the tither!

Ae simmer e'en, when as he through
Pitkirie forest past,
By three braid leaves, blawn aff the trees,
He down to yird was cast;

A tirl o' wind the three braid leaves
Down frae the forest dang,
Ane frae an ash, ane frae an elm,
Ane frae an aik-tree strang;

Ane strak him sair on the back neck
Ane on the nose him rappit,
Ane smote him on the vera heart,
And down as dead he drappit.

But ah! but ah! a drearier dool
Ance hapt at Ounston-dammy,
That heis'd him a' thegither up,
And maist extinguish't Tammy:

For as he came slow-daunderin' down,
In's hand his basket hingin',
And staiver'd ower the hie-road's breidth,
Frae side to side a-swingin',

There came a blast frae Kelly-law,
As bauld a blast as ever
Auld snivelin' Boreas blew abraid
To make the warld shiver.

It liftit Tammy aff his feet,
Mair easy than a shavin',
And hurl'd him half a mile complete
Hie up 'tween earth and heav'n.

That day puir Tammy had wi' stanes
No ballasted his body,
So that he flew, maist like a shot,
Ower corn-land and ower cloddy.

You've seen ane tumbler on a stage
Tumble sax times and mair,
But Tammy weil sax hundred times
Gaed tumblin' through the air.

And whan the whirly-wind gave ower,
He frae the lift fell plumb,
And in a blink stood stickin' fast
In Gaffer Glowr-weel's lum.

Ay—there his legs and body stack
Amang the smotherin' soot;
But by a wonderfu' good luck,
His head kept peepin' out.

But Gaffer Glowr-weel, when he saw
A man stuck in his lum,
He swarf'd wi' drither clean awa,
And sat some seconds dumb.

It took five masons near an hour
A' riving at the lum
Wi' picks (he was sae jamm'd therein)
Ere Tammy out could come.

As for his basket—weel I wat,
His basket's fate and fa'
Was, as I've heard douce neighbours tell,
The queerest thing of a'.

The blast took up the body's creel,
And laid it on a cloud,
That bare it, sailin' through the sky,
Richt ower the Firth's braid flood.

And when the cloud did melt awa,
Then, then the creel cam' down,
And fell'd the town-clerk o' Dunbar
E'en in his ain good town.

The clerk stood yelpin' on the street
At some bit strife that stirr'd him,
Down cam' the creel, and to the yird
It dang him wi' a dirdom!

THE EPITAPH FOR TAMMY.

Oh Earth! oh Earth! if thou hast but
A rabbit-hole to spair,
Oh grant the graff to Tammy's corp,
That it may nestle thair:

And press thou light on him, now dead,
That was sae slim and wee,
For, weel I wat, when he was quick,
He lightly prest on thee!

* An enormous animal of the Mammoth class was disclosed by the melting of the snow in 1801, upon the snow-buried confines of Siberia. How the monster got there—how it was entombed there—appeared inexplicable to the philosophical inquirers of that period, and is only, and to our satisfaction, explained by the story of the text.

EPITAPH ON DAVID BARCLAY,

CHURCH-WARDEN IN ANSTRUTHER EASTER.

Here sleeps, from noisy mirth and laughter free,
The happiest man o' th'eighteenth century;
One who sat merrier on his cobbler's stool,
Than Louis Capet on his throne of rule;
He, who more harmless and with greater glee,
Made graves for corpses at the digger's fee,
Than proud Napoleon, for th'imperial spoil,
Made graves for millions o'er all Europe's soil;
What bliss heroic crown'd poor Barclay's state!
His very littleness did make him great!
Day chased day with pregnant laughter fraught,
Or some new joke, or some new old-shoe brought;
Night chased night with cheek-relaxing mirth,
And with fresh frolic made resound his hearth;
When brain-mad Europe reel'd from shore to shore,
And kings and peoples battl'd long and sore,
He on his stool, which no commotion shook,
Sat imperturb'd, nor of the rage partook;
What day the head of murder'd Capet fell,
And kingdoms shudder'd at the tocsin's knell,
He, in his cobbler's chamber fearing nought,
Sat whistling to his shadow as he wrought;
What day Napoleon from his height renown'd,
Was shook by Europe's earthquake to the ground,
His bloodless awl with unconcern he plied,
And sung his ditty by his ingle-side!
What day reformless Wellington was chas'd
Home to his barricaded house in haste
By England's men, that banded far and wide
To beat him down that beat Napoleon's pride,
Our Barclay, unannoy'd by earthly thing,
Cock'd in his clean snug chamber like a king;
He, rather as a cobbler blythe and free,
And as *himself*, chose sapiently to be,
Than, as the prop of kings and man of pride,
To terrify and to be terrified.
Peace, peaceful David, to thy shade, I say;
And, when thou com'st forth at the judgment day,
Whilst conqu'rors rise with shudd'ring and with pain,
Afraid to face the ghosts of those they've slain,
Thou shalt uprise with gladness in thy face,
To claim the prize of innocence and peace!

ON THE SAME—(SCOTICE.)

Here lies ane wight, ca'd David Barclay,
Weel sepulcher'd amang his hard clay;
Sma' man he was, whan he did flourish—
He was but beadle o' this parish,
And mendit soles, and chimlas soopit,
And blew mouse-wabs frae aff the pupit;
But now, when cramm'd in this woe partie,
He's just as great as Bonaparte!
Nae difference, save that David here
At hame sleeps 'mang his kindred dear,
Wi' ilka star, that kent him livin',
Blinkin' upon him blythe frae heaven:
Whereas the Emperor rots afar
At the warld's end, 'neath Hydra's star,
'Mang foreign worms that keen devour him,
And the cauld south-pole skytin' owre him.
This Barclay was a canty chappie,
Skull-handlin' made him nae less happy:
'Twas but his trade was melancholy,
His spirit aye was blythe and jolly.
King George the Third that ruled this land,
Wi' a braw sceptre in his hand,
And George's ilka son and daughter,
Ne'er took sic hearty gaups o' laughter.
I meikle doubt if a' the thrang
O' kings that in braid Europe rang,
Frae that black-starr'd year achty-nine,
E'en till the day I write this line,
Enjoy'd their lives wi' sic ane gust,
As David wha sleeps here in dust;
Sae, to be merry in this widdle,
Ilk station serves—heigh, laigh, and middle:
Its a' ae woo—king, lord, or beadle!
And let a man be mean or glorious,
Owre armies, or auld shoon, victorious,
Wield swords on fields, or awls on stools,
A' dree alike Death's dreary dools,
And land at length amang the *mools!*

TRANSLATIONS.

ODE

FROM THE PERSIAN OF HAFIZ.

Aee bad neseem yeear daree, &c.

Sweet gale, that on thy wings dost bear
Through sky the fragrance of my fair—
Ah! 'tis from her, I know 'tis from
The paradise of fume divine,
That does her angel-form enshrine,
That thou so balmy rich dost come!

Sweet breeze, that gambolest abroad,
Scatt'ring through thine etherial road,
Rich odours purloin'd from my fair;
Beware! such pilfering I forbid;
What right hast thou, a thief, to thrid
The tangles of her golden hair?

Oh rose! that on thy prickly tree,
Rightest thyself in boastful glee,
As beautiful beyond compare—
What, what art thou, with all thy grace,
To paragon thee to the face
Of her, whom God hath deck'd so fair?

Oh thou Narcissus! that so sweet
Hangest, in mid-day's hour of heat,
Thy leaves all languishingly faint—
What, what art thou to her bright eye,
That rolls itself so tenderly
In love's luxurious languishment?

Oh pine! that shootest up so high,
As if t'enclasp thy love the sky,
With thy tall arms that tower and twine,
Compar'd with her, as she doth move
Stately through garden or through grove,
What grace, what glory can be thine?

Oh ev'ry fragrant herb that round
Scatt'rest through all the garden's bound,
Clouds of rich incense to the sun,
Your luscious scents, your beauteous streaks,
What are they to the gorgeous cheeks
Of her, mine own bliss-breathing one?

Oh wisdom! with thy sapient stores,
Thy ken sublime, whose glance explores
Stars, lands, and oceans with their isles;
In all thy range—land, sky, or sea—
Seest thou ought better than to be
Her lover, living on her smiles?

Courage, oh Hafiz! yet endure
Thy trial; 'twill be crown'd, be sure,
With the full harvest of her charms;
If thou canst but thy pain support
With patience, albeit hard, yet short,
She flies all willing to thine arms!

THE FAIR MAID OF SHEERAZ.

FROM THE PERSIAN OF HAFIZ.

If that fair maid I fancy most,
The pearl of Sheeraz and its boast,
Would not my soul's desire withstand,
Ev'n for the mole, whose sparkling speck
Doth gem and glorify her cheek,
I would bestow, would she but take,
Bokhara and broad Samarcand.

Bring, bring, oh boy! to soothe my pains,
Th'untasted wine that yet remains;
For, not in high-prais'd Paradise
Thou'lt find to make thy soul as glad,
The sweet banks of our Rocnabad,
Or bow'rs of our Mosella, clad
With roses of a thousand dyes.

Ah me! these nymphs that kill and smile!
These sweet deceivers that embroil
Our city with a thousand frays!—
They rob, they desolate my breast,
They plunder me of peace and rest,
Like Turks, that, scouring to the west,
Flee with the plunder that they seize.

Yet though our love be strong indeed,
These nymphs, all-perfect, do not need
That love of ours, imperfect quite;
A face that God hath fashion'd fair,
Needs it (to shine beyond compare)
Perfumes, and paints, and deckings rare
Of art, so quaint and exquisite?

Come, talk to me of wine and glee,
Of song, and dance, and revelry;
Forego all thoughts that gloom forbode—
Nor fret thy wits to comprehend
Thy future haps, thy latter end;
'Tis bootless, as unwise, to send
Thy soul in bodeful search abroad.

Ah! now so keenly do I prove
The torture of delicious love
In my soul's marrow more and more,
That I can image in my thought,
How young-eyed Joseph's beauty smote
Zoleikha so—such frenzy wrought—
That chastity's dear veil she tore.

Oh thou! to me who dearer art
Than the life-blood that feeds my heart,
List to the voice of prudent men
Improve the day of bliss that flies—
So aged folks and sage advise—
And youth, that docile is and wise,
Will not the sage's saw disdain.

Thy tongue, capricious in its phrase,
Slanders me now, now loads with praise;
Heaven pardon thee for speaking ill!
Thou dost abuse Heav'n's gifts divine;—
Do words so bitter, so malign,
Become a ruby lip like thine,
Whence nought but sweetness should distil?

Oh Hafiz! when thy lips indite
Sweet lays, they seem like gems of light,
Pure pearls in row all-gorgeous strung;
Sing, sing them sweet, for on thy lays
Heav'n seems (the more their pomp t'emblaze)
To shed the lustre and the rays
Of her own Pleiads, downward flung.

ODE

FROM THE PERSIAN OF JAMMEE.

Herja ke kunem khaneh, &c.

Oh! in what place soe'er I stay,
By midnight, morning, or by day,
Thou art the inmate of my breast;
I cannot stop, I cannot stray,
But thy sweet image with me aye
Abides, my bosom's dearest guest!

Sleep I at night, I then behold,
Enchas'd in fancy's garish gold,
Thy form, begemming all my dreams;
If lonely in my room I walk,
I see thee sit, I hear thee talk,
And, though awake, my fancy teems.

When in the tavern down I sit
With boon companions loath to quit,
The wine but fires thine image more;
When I with wordly-minded men
Converse of business and its gain,
Thee, thee, mine idol, I adore!

When in th'assembly-room the dance
Joyous beneath the taper's glance,
Careers and flashes to and fro,
I see thy form (seen else by none),
More bright than Venus round the sun,
Circling the taper's glorious glow!

Should I put off my holy weeds,
And down to ocean's pearl-pav'd meads
Dive from the shore with daring leap,
There I, in each rich shell of sea,
A precious pearl, should spy out *thee*,
Enflaming the surrounding deep!

To each delight, far, near, or round,
Things hop'd in Heav'n, in earth things found,
Lost is thy Jammee's heart and mind;
Earth's jewels in thee are compress'd—
And Paradise, however blest,
In thee finds all her blessings join'd!

THE SWEETEST SPOT.

FROM THE PERSIAN OF MESNAVI.

Oh thou, whose foot erratic still,
And restless as thy wayward will,
From shore to steep, from vale to hill,
All round this glorious orb has reel'd,
Oh! say, of all thine eyes hath seen,
Each town of gold, each grove of green,
Which is the sweetest, happiest scene,
The richest town, the fairest field?

Oh lady, lady! that dear place,
Though poor of soil and scant in space,
Where she we love, the girl whose grace
Has with sweet bondage bless'd the breast:
That spot where she in pomp doth bide,
However mean, o'er all beside,
Empires of power and lands of pride,
Is sweetest, richest, fairest, best!

Wherever dwells the maid we prize,
Bright as the moon that walks the skies,
Her presence doth imparadise
The nook where she in light doth move;
Were it a sunless cavern drear,
To her bless'd lover 'twould appear
More rose-bestrew'd, and bright, and clear,
Than Eden, rich with light and love!

Oh thou, my soul's belov'd! with thee
The dragon's dungeon would to me
But as a bower of roses be,
All pav'd and beautified with bliss;
Heart-plund'rer! whom I love too well,
With thee I joyously could dwell
Ev'n in the howling halls of hell,
And from thy lips an Eden kiss!

FROM THE PERSIAN OF SAADEE.

As Nushir-van, of blaz'd renown,
The king of many a shire and town,
Upon his death-bed lay,
His son, whose soul all meek in youth,
Show'd blossoms fair of worth and truth,
He call'd, and from his fluttering mouth
Address'd his dying say:—

"I go, my Hormuz! to th'abode
Of peace; but to thy father's God
I leave thee all secure:
Oh swerve not from the righteous way;
Be thou to helpless ones a stay;
So shall thy throne on justice aye
Be founded strong and sure!

And be not sluggard then, though crown'd;
In chains, like other princes, bound
Of ease and grandeur gay;
Oh when on purple couch supine,
Thou wallowest redolent of wine,
Alas! thy poor ones most do pine,
'Neath petty tyrants' sway.

Who lauds the shepherd that doth sleep,
When out among his harmless sheep
The bloody wolf is gone?
Arise, my son, and with thy might,
Protect the lowly and th'upright,
Since *through them* kings attain their height,
And reign *for them* alone!

My son, the people are the *root*—
The king the *tree*, that up doth shoot
High from it branching fair;
If thriving be the root and sound,
The glories of the tree abound,
Exuberating round and round
Their sun-spread pride in air!"

THE FAIR ONE WHOM I MEAN.

FROM THE GERMAN OF BURGER.

Oh, in what pomp of love serene
Smiles she, the fair one whom I mean!
Tell it, my pious mouth, to earth
Whose wonder-working hand shines forth,
Whereby in pomp of love serene
She smiles, that fair one whom I mean!

Who has illum'd and kindled bright
Like Paradise her eyes' blue light?
Ev'n he whose pow'r o'er sea and land,
Heav'n's blue bright bending arch hath spann'd;
He hath illum'd and kindled bright
Like Paradise her eyes' blue light!

Who with such master-skill hath spread
Sweet o'er her cheek life's white and red?
He who to th'almond's blossom lent
Its beauteous tincture, dew-besprent;
He, with such master-skill, hath spread
Sweet o'er her cheek life's white and red!

Who form'd her purple mouth so fair,
So rich with sweetness living there?
He who with lusciousness so mild,
Fills the red berry, July's child;
He made her purple mouth so fair,
So rich with sweetness living there!

Who made her silken tresses flow
All-waving round her neck of snow?
He whose sweet west-wind o'er the plain,
Rocks the glad stalks of golden grain;
He bade her silken tresses flow
All-waving round her neck of snow!

Who touch'd for heav'nly speech or song
Her voice with rapture all day long?
He who did lend the lark his note,
And philomel his tuneful throat;
He touch'd for heav'nly speech or song
Her voice with rapture all day long!

Who hath so arch'd her beauteous breast,
Where pleasure has his golden rest?
He that the swan's white bosom fair
Curves out with plumage rich and rare;
He hath so arch'd that beauteous breast
Where pleasure has his golden rest!

What artist fram'd, in high design,
Her waist, so delicate, so fine?
He from whose perfect mind beam'd forth
Beauty's each form in heav'n and earth;
That mighty Artist did design
Her waist, so delicate and fine!

Who breath'd into her form a mind
So pure, angelical, and kind?
He that the angels made on high,
These holy children of the sky;
He breath'd into her form a mind
So pure, angelical, and kind!

Oh praise, Great Maker! to thine art,
And thanks warm-bursting from my heart,
That beauty's type enchants me so,
Crown'd with each grace thy world can show;
Oh praise, Great Maker! to thine art,
And thanks warm-bursting from my heart?

But ah! for whom on earth below
Smiles she, attired in beauty so?
Oh God! might I have ne'er been born,
Ne'er seen thy blissful light of morn,
If not *for me* in beauty so,
Smiles she, that fair one whom I know!

THE HUGE SHIP OF HIERO.

FROM THE GREEK OF ARCHIMELUS.

Somewhat amplified by the Translator.

Who plann'd, who rear'd, so vast of amplitude,
This mountain-ship, this labyrinth of wood?
Who founded, fortified, and laid in strength,
Her keel, enormous in its oaken length?
Who launch'd her down? who drew her into sea
With ropes and rollers of immensity?
Who meted out with ochre and with line,
Her convex frame, plank'd round with fir and pine?
What axes, lighting with tremendous stroke,
Chipp'd her huge timbers and her knees of oak?
Like wood-crown'd Etna tow'ring to the clouds
She sits, encumb'ring with her weight the floods;
Or like some island of the Cyclades,
Round which, displac'd, roll surlily the seas.
Have not the giants fram'd her for their use,
Their pleasure yacht for an Atlantic cruise,
To scud around the world in paddling play
With the blythe bright sun on a summer's day,
Then cross at night, oblique from pole to pole,
Peep o'er the ices, and survey the whole?
Her yards, for want of room, into the clouds
Thrust their heav'n-spanning arms, as by she scuds;
Upon her main-top pitch'd, a giant might
Stretch out his hand toward the Zenith's height,
And pluck the Pleiads from their place of light.
Such cables bind her anchors as of yore
Were bound by Xerxes to the Abydian shore,
When by his bridge of boats and cables vast
Two continents with knots he coupl'd fast;
Her stern, high rear'd with elevation bold,
In gorgeous letters over-fret with gold,
Proclaims his name whose heart the ship design'd,
Whose treasures answer'd his high soaring mind—
Great Hiero, who rules with mild command
Sicilia's happy hearts and happy land;
Who built her for this noble use—that he
Might waft his country's harvests over sea;
And from her huge life-giving hold, might bless
Lands with the gifts of Ceres honour'd less—
Greece, and his isles, when famine sore doth press.
Oh speed the vessel, Neptune! be thy care
Her on thy vault of waters safe to bear;
And not unworthy prove thyself to be
Of the great gallant gift conferr'd on thee,
This ship-o'ertowering ship, this palace of the sea!

THE MINSTREL.

FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE.

"What minstrel voice is this that rings
So blythely by my castle wall?
Command the joyous wight that sings
To appear within and bless my hall."
The king commands—the page forth flies;
The page returns; the monarch cries—
"Admit, admit the old man to me,
That makes my court resound with glee!"

"Accept, oh sire, a bard's salute!
Accept it, lords and lovely dames!
What heav'n is here!—what glances shoot!
These stars! who may tell all their names?
Be shut, mine eyes! nor dare to gaze
On palace-pomp, and beauty's blaze;
Here is not place nor time, I ween,
Long to luxuriate with my eyne!"

He closed his eyelids, and begun
His harp-wed roundel, clear and strong;
The sturdy-hearted knights were won—
The ladies captivate with song;
The monarch, grateful for the joy,
Commands his page, the laughing boy,
To bring a golden chain, that he
Might pay the poet for his glee.

"Sire, give me not the golden chain;
The golden chain give to your knights,
That prop and decorate your reign
With gallantry, and feats, and fights;
Or to your chanc'lor, that maintains
The state's expense with sweat and pains;
Add, to his load of things of state,
The golden chain's less cumbrous weight!

I sing as bird in spring-time sings,
Rock'd in his house of tufted tree;
The song that from glad heart up-rings,
Itself is rich repaying fee:
Yet, should I dare t'entreat at all,
'Twould be a guerdon slight and small—
But one draught of thy best of wine,
From golden cup so pure and fine!"

He got the cup—he drain'd its bliss;
"Oh draught, of heav'nly pow'r possest!
Oh blessed be the house, where this
Is of its blissful gifts the least!
Walk ye in joy up life's gay road,
So think of me, and thank your God,
With heart as throbbing warm as mine
Thanks you for your good cup of wine!"

THE VIOLET.

FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE.

A violet on the meadow stood,
And droop'd in dewy solitude,
Abash'd its gentle head:
There came, with bounding pace along,
A shepherd-maiden fair and young,
And hither-thither tript and sung,
Rejoicing o'er the mead.

Ah! (thinks the violet) were I now
But for a little while, I trow,
Fair nature's fairest bloom!
That she, my love that gambols near,
Might nip me idly dangling here,
And plant me on her bosom dear,
T'expire in my perfume!

But ah! but ah! that maid tript by,
Nor did the bashful violet spy;
She trod poor violet!
It died, yet sung, as it did die,
I die, but die rejoicingly
That, by her dear foot trodden, I
So sweet a death have met!

KNIGHT TOGGENBURG.

FROM THE GERMAN OF SCHILLER.

"I love thee, gentle knight! but 'tis
Such love as sisters bear;
Oh ask my heart no more than this—
That heart no more may spare!
In peace I see thy form appear,
In peace I see thee go;
But check that sigh, and stop that tear,
Their cause I may not know!"

In grief he heard her soft rebuke;
Mute from her arms he sprung;
Gave one farewell, one last fond look,
Then on his steed him swung.
He to his vassals orders gave,
Through all his Switzer-band,
To hie them to the Holy Grave,
Christ's banner in their hand.

Deeds were done there of force and fame
By ev'ry hero's arm;
Then tufted helms did wave and flame,
Amid Mohammed's swarm.
And Toggenburg's loud-rumour'd name
Fill'd Pagans with alarm;
Yet, in his heart, love's gloomy flame
Burn'd on with hidden harm.

One year he hath endur'd the grief—
Nor longer can it bear;
Abandon'd to unrest, the chief
Leaves Jewry and the war.
He sees a ship on Joppa's strand,
Just bound for Europe's seas—
Embarks for home, and that lov'd land,
Rich with *her* breath's sweet breeze.

And at *her* castle's silent gate
The pilgrim knocks in fear;
'Twas open'd—and a voice like fate
Came dreadful on his ear;—
"She whom you seek is now Heav'n's bride,
In cloister's still abode;
'Twas yesterday the bond was tied
That spous'd her to her God!"

Ah! now he leaves, full sad and sore,
His halls built fair and high;
His arms, his true steed, never more
Rejoice that warrior's eye.
From Toggenburg, his sire's domain,
He to the vale comes down,
Enwrapt and hid, from fellows' ken,
By hairy hood and gown.

And there a little hut he rears,
Near to the linden-grove,
Where holy, in the midst appears,
The cloister of his love:
All day, from morning's earliest beam,
Till evening chill and late,
Still fondling hope's delirious dream,
There, there alone he sate.

And on the cloister's casement hung
All day untir'd his look,
Until the lattice clank'd and rung
Beneath her finger's stroke;
Till the dear damsel, angel-mild,
Th'espoused to her God,
Down on the valley look'd and smil'd,
And bless'd him with a nod.

And then in peace he, in his bower,
Lay down and slumber'd fain;
And rose rejoic'd at morning hour,
To feast his eyes again.
And so for many a day he sate,
And many a year and long,
Patient, withouten plaint, to wait
Until her lattice rung;

Till the dear damsel, angel-mild,
Th'espoused to her God,
Look'd on his little hut, and smil'd,
And bless'd him with a nod.
And so, one morn, he in the vale,
A corpse sate livid there,
And tow'rd the lattice, still his pale
Eye turn'd its lifeless glare!

LEONORE.

If the following translation of Burger's most celebrated poem has any merit, it must consist principally in its compression and brevity. The author's peculiar stanza, with the same collocation of rhymes, is here used by the translator; the lines, as to number of syllables, having the same metrical length, saving that the 2d, 4th, 7th, and 8th lines, which in the original terminate in double, here end in single rhymes. Each stanza, therefore, of this translation is less, by *four syllables*, than each of the original.

Young Leonore with light of morn
Up-rose from dreams of dread;
"My William! wilt thou ne'er return?
Art thou untrue or dead?"
He had, with royal Fred'rick's might,
March'd off for Prague to share the fight;
Nor tidings to his home
Had of his safety come.

Emp'ror and Empress, of that feud
Now weary, did surcease
Their bitterness of ireful mood,
And to the land gave peace;
And either host, with shouts that rang,
With cymbal's chime and clank and clang,
Crown'd with gay branches green,
Are homeward marching seen.

And far and near and round about,
On high-road, path, and street,
Come young and old all swarming out,
That homeward host to meet:
"Thanks, thanks to God!" wife, children cried;
"Welcome," cried many a blythesome bride.
But ah! for Leonore
Were kiss and bliss no more!

She question'd all the line along
Of him she lov'd so dear,
But none of all that soldier-throng
Gave to her word of cheer;
And when the troops had all pass'd by,
Her locks she tore with scream and cry,
And threw herself on ground
In plight of woe profound.

"Mercy, oh God!" her mother mild
Ran crying with alarms,
"What aileth thee, my dearest child?"
And caught her in her arms.
"Oh mother! what is done is done;
Now, farewell all beneath the sun!
With God no pity lies—
Woe, woe, to me!" she cries.

"Help, God! look on us from above!
Child! pray thy soul to peace;
What God hath done is done in love;
God is a God of grace!"
"Oh mother, mother! vain that thought—
God not to me in love hath wrought;
What boots thine idle prayer?
God hath of me no care!"

"Help, God! who best the father knows
Knows best his filial love;
To thy sad soul a sweet repose
God's sacrament shall prove."
"Oh mother, mother! to my woe
No sacrament can rest bestow—
That the dead man should live,
What sacrament can give?"

"How if that false false man, my child,
In Hung'ry's distant land,
(His faith renounc'd) hath thee beguil'd
For some new marriage-band?
Let his heart whirl about as wind,
No gain, no true-love shall he find;
When his soul seeks the pit
His sin shall punish it."

"Oh mother! thus to fret is vain—
My loss must needs be borne;
Death, death is now mine only gain;
Would I had ne'er been born!
Be quench'd, be quench'd for aye, my light!
Perish my soul in gloom and night!
God's mercies cease to flow—
Woe to me, poor one, woe!"

"Help, God! nor into judgment go
With this thy poor weak child:
What her tongue saith she doth not know;
Forgive her wand'rings wild!
Oh child! thine earthly pain forget—
Heav'n's bliss and God before thee set;
So shall thy soul be join'd
To bridegroom true and kind."

"Oh mother! what is heavenly bliss?
Oh mother! what is hell?
With him, with him is heavenly bliss!—
Without my William, hell:
Be quench'd, be quench'd for aye, my light!
Perish my soul in gloom and night!
Without him, nor on earth
Nor heav'n, for me is mirth!"

Thus in her bosom and her brain,
Wild, wild despair did rage,
And with God's providence in vain
A rash war did she wage;
She wrung her hands, she smote her breast,
'Till the sun vanish'd in the west,
And up heav'n's golden arch
The golden stars 'gan march.

And hark! without, a trampling sound,
As if of hoof of steed;
And, down with clatter on the ground,
A rider bounds with speed;
And hark! and hark! the door's loose ring
'Gins tingle with a kling-kling-kling;
Then through the valve's close frame
Audible words there came:—

"Holloa! holloa! Up!—open, dear!
Dost wake, my girl, or sleep?
Continues yet thy love sincere?
Dost thou or laugh or weep?"
"Ha! William there?—so late at night?
Wept, watch'd, have I, a weary wight;
Ah, suffer'd direful woe!
Whence com'st thou riding so?"

"At midnight saddle we our steeds—
I from Bohemia ride;
Late, late I donn'd my bridal weeds,
To take thee hence, my bride."
"So quick!—ah William! first come in;
Hark to the wind's leaf-rustling din!
Ah, come! within my arms
Be warm'd from night's chill harms!"

"Let the wind blow, dear; let it stir
The leaves with rustling din;
My horse paws proud—loud clangs the spur—
I dare not house within:
Come, tuck thee up! spring, spring with speed
Behind me on my coal-black steed!
A hundred miles, dear bride,
We home to bed must ride!"

"This night a hundred miles wilt thou
Me home to bride-bed bring?
Hark! how the clock still hums—e'en now
Eleven hath ceas'd to ring!"
"Look here, look here! The moon shines bright!
We and the dead ride quick by night!
Ere twelve's long hour shall ring
Thee home to bed I bring!"

"Where is thy chamber, then?—oh where
The bed of our repose?"
"Far hence—'tis narrow, silent, drear,
Six boards its frame compose!"
"Room in't for me?" "For me and thee;
Up! spring thou, swing thou close to me!
The marriage-guests are met;
Doors open—meats all set!"

The maid tuck'd up, and up she sprung
High on the horse in haste,
And fast her lily-hands she flung
Around the rider's waist;
And hurry, hurry!—hop, hop, hop!
They gallop'd off sans stay or stop;
That horse and horseman blew,
And sparks and splinters flew!

On right hand and on left how fleet
Before their eyen did scud
Hedges and heaths!—how 'neath their feet
The bridges thunder'd loud!
"Fears yet my love? The moon shines bright!
Hurrah! the dead ride fast at night!
For dead folk art a-dread?"
"Ah no!—yet leave the dead!"

What din this on the highway's verge?
Why flit the rav'ns o'erhead?
Hark! clink of bell!—Hark! dead man's dirge!—
"*Let us entomb the dead.*"
And aye the fun'ral-folk drew near,
Coffin, and crape, and pall, and bier;
The song was like the shriek
Of frogs, in pools that squeak.

"When twelve's long hour hath struck, with song
And howl, then tomb thy dead;
Now, my young wife I bear along
With me to bridal-bed!
Come, sexton, with thy chaunter-crowd,
Shriek, shriek our bridal hymn aloud!
Come priest, and speak the blessing,
Ere bed-ward we be pressing!"

The song was at his bidding hush'd—
Evanish'd bier and pall;
And at his horse's heels they rush'd—
Priest, sexton, choir, and all;
And onward scudding without stop,
They flurried, hurried—hop, hop, hop!
That horse and horseman blew,
And sparks and splinters flew!

How flew on right hand, how on left
Huge forests with their hills!
How flew on left, and right and left,
Towers, turrets, rivers, rills!
"Fears yet my love? The moon shines bright!
Hurrah! the dead ride fleet by night!
For dead folk art a-dread?"
"Ah! let them rest, the dead!"

Look, look beside the gallows-tree,
All round the murd'rous wheel,
An airy people, dire to see,
Doth in the moonshine reel!
"Ha! gloomy group! come hither, come,
And follow me with whine and hum!
Trip ye our bridal dance
As bed-ward we advance!"

The gloomy group, with wings that brush,
Come flying fast behind,
As rustles through the hazel-bush
Amid dry leaves the wind;
And onward, onward!—hop, hop, hop!
Flick'ring they flew, sans stay or stop!
That horse and horseman blew,
And sparks and splinters flew!

How flew what seemed the moon on high
Down to th'horizon far!
How scudded heav'n's vast zodiac by,
With planet and with star!
"Fears yet my love? The moon shines bright!
Hurrah! the dead ride fleet at night!
For dead folk art a-dread?"
"Woe's me! let rest the dead!"

"Hey! onward, horse! the cock now crows—
Our sand's nigh run, my steed;
On! on! the morning breeze now blows;
I smell it!—onward! speed!
Finish'd—ha!—finish'd now our race!
The bride-bed opes its small chill space!
Dead folk, how fast they trot!
We are upon the spot!"

They stood beside a trellis-gate
Of iron, drear to view;
'Twas touch'd—with clank and clang, the grate,
Bar, bolt and lock, up-flew!
The trellis'd valves rebound with force,
And over graves was now their course;
Thick in the moonshine shone
Tombs dark of carved stone!

Look, look! e'en in a moment's space,
(God's grace, how terrible!)
Like tinder, dropping piece by piece,
The rider's doublet fell!
His head, so tufted late and fair,
Grinn'd a grim skull, sans skin and hair—
A skeleton the rest,
With scythe and death's gear drest!

High pranc'd the steed with head elate—
Fire flash'd as he did neigh;
When lo! beneath her as she sate
He vanish'd quite away!
Loud howlings bellow'd down from air;
From graves low whimp'rings of despair
The heart of Leonore
'Tween death and life beat sore.

Now, round and round, by moon's pale glance
Of ghosts the sheeted throng
Gambol'd their grim and hideous dance,
And shriek'd their shrilly song!
"Be patient! albeit hearts be riv'n,
Yet quarrel not with God in heav'n;
Now thou'rt from flesh disjoin'd—
God to thy soul be kind!"

END OF TENNANT'S POEMS.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY W. AND R. CHAMBERS,
19, WATERLOO PLACE.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

ROBERT FERGUSSON.

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

AND NOTES ILLUSTRATING LOCAL AND PERSONAL ALLUSIONS.

EDINBURGH:

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

1840.

Edinburgh:
Printed by W. and R. Chambers,
19, Waterloo Place.

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF ROBERT FERGUSSON.

The author of the following poems bears a rank in modern Scottish verse next to Burns and Ramsay. Burns acknowledged that the flame of poetry was rekindled in his bosom by reading the poems of Ramsay *and Fergusson*. Several of the most admired productions of the Ayrshire bard were formed on models supplied by Fergusson, whom he never loses an opportunity of speaking of with respect and regret, calling him on one occasion

> ——"my elder brother in misfortune,
> By far my elder brother in the muses."

It can never, moreover, be forgot that the sayer of these words proved the sincerity of his sentiments, extravagant as they may in some degree have been, by raising a monument over the remains of Fergusson.

Robert Fergusson was born in Edinburgh, October 17, 1750. His father, William Fergusson, originally of the north of Scotland, was an accountant in the service of the British Linen Company. The poet was a very weakly child, and his education was therefore irregular; yet, notwithstanding long periods of absence from his tasks, he went through a classical course at the high-school of his native city and the grammar-school of Dundee, with considerable credit. Being designed for the clerical profession, he was sent at thirteen years of age to the University of St Andrews, where, as a bursar, he studied gratuitously for four years. What progress he made in his studies has not been very clearly stated; but it was now that he first developed a turn for wit, mimicry, and practical fun, which adhered to him through his short life, and also the seeds of his poetical talent. The porter of the university many years afterwards described him at one felicitous dash—"he was a tricky callant, but a fine laddie for a' that." Amongst other whimsicalities related of him with regard to this period of his life, it was his custom, when he received a little supply of money from home, to hang it out in a bag at his window, that all his companions might know of the singular condition he was in for a poet.

At seventeen, his father being dead, and his mother poor, he resolved to abandon thoughts of the church, to which, probably, he had never had any great liking. While hesitating what other profession to follow, he went to reside for a time with a maternal uncle named Forbes, who lived near Aberdeen. There he remained till his clothes became so much worn that his relative thought it necessary to give him a hint to return home. He withdrew indignant, and proceeding to Edinburgh on foot, fell ill on his arrival at his mother's house. The first moments of renewed health he devoted to the composition of two poems, *On the Decay of Friendship*, and *Against Repining at Fortune*, both bearing allusion to the late mortifying incident.

He was now compelled for mere bread to condescend to the humble office of a copyist of legal papers in the business room of the commissary-clerk of Edinburgh, receiving probably for his drudgery only as much as sufficed to keep soul and body together. It was in this situation that he composed the poems which have given him a name. These were published from time to time in *Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine*, and soon attracted general notice. The public saw in the author of *Caulder Oysters*, *Leith Races*, and *the Rising of the Session*, a poet worthy to be named beside Ramsay, yet tranquilly allowed that poet to dole out his weary life in penury and an unworthy toil. It is melancholy to think of this amiable and ingenious young man bound for years to tasks fit for the dullest of mortals, living in abject poverty under the roof of a widowed mother, and knowing none of life's enjoyments above those derived from an occasional hour in a cellar tavern. The only change of employment he ever obtained, was a transference to the sheriff-clerk's office, there to perform the same duties, or worse. Finding, in this new situation, that he was expected also to take a share in the enforcement of writs of distress, he retreated in the course of a few months to the chambers of the commissary-clerk, where he spent the remainder of his days, excepting those marked by severe illness.

The constitution of Fergusson had always been infirm, as was sufficiently betokened by his slender unsteady frame and pale complexion. Some months after he had completed his twenty-third year, while under a medicine remarkable for its searching effects on the system, he engaged in the intemperate scenes of a county election, in the course of which he caught a severe cold. The consequences of a cold under such circumstances are usually severe upon the nervous system. In Fergusson's case they produced complete mental derangement. His insanity took a religious turn, and he became impressed with the conviction that he was a sinner given over to everlasting reprobation. For some time his mother kept him in her house, but was at length obliged, for the sake of proper attendance, to consign him to a very poor asylum, then and still existing near the city-workhouse. He had been alarmed at the idea of this step being taken, and it was necessary to convey him to the place under a false pretence. When he found himself in the dismal retreat, he broke into a yell of rage and despair, to which the other inmates replied from their separate cells. The friends who had beguiled him to the spot, departed thrilled with horror.

He was here confined for two months. By and bye, when the comparative tranquillity of his mind permitted the indulgence, he was allowed to receive visits from his mother and sister. But the benighted poet was no more to walk the ways of this world. A few days before his dissolution, his mother and sister found him lying on his straw-bed, calm and collected. The evening was chill and damp: he requested his mother to gather the bed-clothes about him and sit on his feet, for he said they were so very cold as to be almost insensible to the touch. She did as he requested, and his sister took her seat by the bed-side. He looked wistfully in his mother's face, and said, "Oh, mother, this is kind." Then addressing his sister, he said, "Might you not come frequently and sit beside me? You cannot imagine how comfortable it would be. You might fetch your seam, and sit beside me." The mother and sister answered only with tears and sobs. "What ails you?" said the dying poet; "why sorrow for me? I am very well cared for here, and want for nothing—only it is cold, very cold. You know I told you it would come to this at last. Oh, do not go yet, mother—I hope to be soon—oh, do not go yet!—do not leave me!" But the keeper motioned that the time was past, and they must depart. They never again saw Robert Fergusson in life. He was found a few mornings thereafter dead in his cell. This event took place on the 16th of October 1774, when he was a day less than twenty-four years old. His remains were interred in the Canongate churchyard.[1]

Fergusson, as already said, was slender in person, and of pale complexion. His eyes were dark and brilliant, and his whole appearance, though somewhat effeminate, was pleasing. He possessed a beautiful voice, which, with his fine ear for music, enabled him to sing the melodies of his native land with delightful effect. His manners were gentle, notwithstanding his turn for waggery and practical joking; and during his brief career, though he gained many friends, he scarcely made a single enemy.

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[1] Burns, immediately after his arrival in Edinburgh, sought out the grave of Fergusson, and threw himself upon it in a transport of mournful feeling, in which probably some presentiment of his own unhappy fate was mingled. Some documents connected with his erection of a monument over the remains of the Edinburgh bard, are given by Dr Currie. The Gentleman's Magazine (November 1823) publishes another of a curious nature, namely, the account of Messrs J. and R. Burn, builders, against Robert Burns, for the expense of the monument. It was as follows:—

Mr Robert Burns

1789, To J. and R. Burn.

June 23.	54 feet polished Craigleith stone, for a head-stone for Robert Fergusson, at 1s.,	£2	14	0
	10 feet 8 inches dble. base mouldings, at 1s. 6d.,	0	16	0
	4 large cramp irons,	0	2	10
	2 stones to set the base on, at 1s.,	0	2	0
	320 letters on do. at 8s.,	1	5	8
	Lead and setting up do.,	0	5	0
	Grave-digger's dues,	0	4	6
		£5	10	0

His habits were convivial, according to the prevalent taste of his time and place, but do not appear to have been marked by any gross excesses. In an estimate of his poetical abilities, his English compositions may be fairly set aside, as, with scarcely an exception, they display no features calculated to arrest attention. When we look, however, to his Scottish poems, especially those of a comic and descriptive character, we find great vivacity and playfulness, with a sprinkling of beautiful imagery, and a flow of language, rich in choice and expressive terms, and of great smoothness. He has not certainly the fine energy of Burns, yet he has no small share of his manly sense and generous feeling. When we consider, moreover, that most of these poems were produced before their author had completed his twenty-third year, we cannot well hesitate to admit that the notice which they have obtained from his countrymen has been in the main deserved.

Ill-fated genius!—heaven-taught Fergusson!
What heart that feels and will not yield a tear,
To think life's sun did set ere well begun
To shed its influence on thy bright career.
Oh! why should truest worth and genius pine
Beneath the iron grasp of want and woe,
While titled knaves and idiot greatness shine
In all the splendour fortune can bestow?

BURNS.[1]

[1] Inscribed in a copy of "The World," and heretofore not included in Burns's works.

[In the present edition of Fergusson's Poems, notes have been added to elucidate local and personal allusions. These are distinguished from the poet's own notes, by being within brackets.]

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POEMS OF ROBERT FERGUSSON.

POEMS IN THE SCOTTISH DIALECT.

THE KING'S BIRTH-DAY IN EDINBURGH.

Oh! qualis hurly-burly fuit, si forte vidisses.
Polemo-Middinia.

I sing the day sae aften sung,
Wi' which our lugs hae yearly rung,
In whase loud praise the Muse has dung
A' kind o' print;
But, wow! the limmer's fairly flung;
There's naething in't.

I'm fain to think the joy's the same
In London town as here at hame,
Whare fouk o' ilka age and name,
Baith blind and cripple,
Forgather aft, oh fie for shame!
To drink and tipple.

Oh Muse! be kind, and dinna fash us
To flee awa beyond Parnassus,
Nor seek for Helicon to wash us,
That heath'nish spring;
Wi' Highland whisky scour our hawses,
And gar us sing.

Begin, then, dame! ye've drunk your fill;
You wouldna hae the tither gill?
You'll trust me, mair would do you ill,
And ding ye doitet:
'Troth, 'twould be sair against my will
To hae the wyte o't.

Sing, then, how on the fourth o' June[1]
Our bells screed aff a loyal tune;
Our ancient castle shoots at noon,
Wi' flagstaff buskit,
Frae which the sodger blades come down
To cock their musket.

Oh willawins! Mons Meg, for you;
'Twas firin' crack'd thy muckle mou;
What black mishanter gart ye spew
Baith gut and ga'?
I fear, they bang'd thy belly fu',
Against the law.[2]

Right seenil am I gien to bannin;
But, by my saul, ye was a cannon
Could hit a man, had he been stannin
In shire o' Fife,
Sax lang Scots miles ayont Clackmannan,
And tak his life.

The hills in terror would cry out,
And echo to thy dinsome rout;
The herds would gather in their nowt,
That glowr'd wi' wonder,
Hafflins afley'd to bide thereout
To hear thy thunder.

Sing, likewise, Muse! how blue-gown bodies,[1]
Like scare-craws new taen down frae woodies,
Come here to cast their clouted duddies,
And get their pay:
Than them what magistrate mair proud is
On King's birth-day?

On this great day the city-guard,[2]
In military art weel lear'd,
Wi' powder'd pow, and shaven beard,
Gang through their functions;
By hostile rabble seldom spared
O' clarty unctions.

Oh soldiers! for your ain dear sakes,
For Scotland's, *alias* Land o' Cakes,
Gie not her bairns sic deadly paiks,
Nor be sae rude,
Wi' firelock or Lochaber aix,
As spill their bluid.

Now round and round the serpents whiz,
Wi' hissin' wrath and angry phiz;
Sometimes they catch a gentle gizz,
Alack-a-day!
And singe, wi' hair-devouring bizz,
Its curls away.

[1] [The fidelity of the description in these stanzas will be acknowledged by all who remember the streets of Edinburgh on a king's birth-day previous to the year 1810, after which, from the illness of George III., the festivity greatly declined.]

[2] [Mons Meg is an enormous piece of artillery, of rude and antique construction, which still exists in Edinburgh Castle. It consists of longitudinal bars, hooped, and is twenty inches in the bore, the length being about eighteen feet. It is supposed to have been founded by James IV., who carried it to the siege of Norham in 1498. We learn from Fountainhall's Notes that it was burst when firing a salute to James Duke of York, on his visit to the castle, October 1680. Fergusson paints very faithfully the whimsical notions entertained by the Scottish populace respecting this tremendous engine of war.]

[1] [The blue-gowns, or king's beadsmen, are a set of privileged beggars peculiar to Scotland. Their numbers are the same as the years of the monarch's life, and on the sovereign's birth-day they are paid from the Scottish exchequer in Edinburgh as many pence as the king is years old, besides getting a sermon from one of the king's chaplains, a new dress of blue, and a good dinner. Edie Ochiltree, in "the Antiquary," is described as a *blue-gown*.]

[2] [The city-guard was an armed police, which existed in Edinburgh, from (probably) the reign of James VI. till the year 1817, when it was dissolved. It was composed of somewhat more than a hundred men, in three companies, the officers being generally decayed tradesmen, and the privates invalid members of Highland regiments. Upon the whole, it was a body as much laughed at as feared. Scott, in describing them in his "Heart of Mid-Lothian," adverts to the frequent notice which poor Fergusson takes of them, which, says the novelist, might have almost entitled him to be considered their poet-laureate.]

Should the owner patiently keek round,
To view the nature o' his wound,
Dead pussie, draigled through the pond,
Taks him a lounder,
Which lays his honour on the ground
As flat's a flounder.

The Muse maun also now implore
Auld wives to steek ilk hole and bore;
If baudrins slip but to the door,
I fear, I fear,
She'll no lang shank upon all four
This time o' year.

Neist day ilk hero tells his news,
O' crackit crowns and broken brows,
And deeds that here forbid the Muse
Her theme to swell,
Or time mair precious to abuse,
Their crimes to tell;

She'll rather to the fields resort,
Where music gars the day seem short;
Where doggies play and lambies sport,
On gowany braes;
Where peerless fancy hauds her court,
And tunes her lays.

THE DAFT DAYS.

[The festive days kept in Scotland at the New-year are so called, on account of the mad frolics by which they were wont to be distinguished. The days more particularly celebrated were Yule (Christmas), Hogmanay (the last day of the year), New-Year's day, and Handsel-Monday—that is, the first Monday of the year, so called from the custom of giving presents or handsels on that day.]

Now mirk December's dowie face
Glowers owre the rigs wi' sour grimace,
While, through his *minimum* o' space,
The bleer-ee'd sun,
Wi' blinkin' light and stealin' pace,
His race doth run.

Frae naked groves nae birdie sings;
To shepherd's pipe nae hillock rings;
The breeze nae odorous flavour brings
Frae Borean cave;
And dwynin' nature droops her wings,
Wi' visage grave.

Mankind but scanty pleasure glean
Frae snawy hill or barren plain,
When winter, 'midst his nippin' train,
Wi' frozen spear,
Sends drift owre a' his bleak domain,
And guides the weir.

Auld Reikie! thou'rt the canty hole,
A bield for mony a cauldrife soul,
Wha snugly at thine ingle loll,
Baith warm and couth;
While round they gar the bicker roll,
To weet their mouth.

When merry Yule-day comes, I trow,
You'll scantlins find a hungry mou;
Sma' are our cares, our stamacks fu'
O' gusty gear,
And kickshaws, strangers to our view
Sin' fernyear.

Ye browster wives! now busk ye braw,
And fling your sorrows far awa;
Then, come and gie's the tither blaw
O' reaming ale,
Mair precious than the Well o' Spa,
Our hearts to heal.

Then, though at odds wi' a' the warl',
Amang oursels we'll never quarrel;
Though discord gie a canker'd snarl
To spoil our glee,
As lang's there's pith into the barrel,
We'll drink and gree.

Fiddlers! your pins in temper fix,
And rozet weel your fiddlesticks,
But banish vile Italian tricks
Frae out your quorum;
Nor fortes wi' pianos mix—
Gie's Tullochgorum.[1]

For nought can cheer the heart sae weel
As can a canty Highland reel;
It even vivifies the heel
To skip and dance:
Lifeless is he wha canna feel
Its influence.

Let mirth abound; let social cheer
Invest the dawnin' o' the year;
Let blythesome innocence appear,
To crown our joy;
Nor envy, wi' sarcastic sneer,
Our bliss destroy.

And thou, great god of *aqua vitæ!*
Wha sway'st the empire o' this city—
When fou, we're sometimes capernoity—
Be thou prepared
To hedge us frae that black banditti,
The city guard.

CAULER OYSTERS.

Happy the man, who free from care and strife,
In silken or in leathern purse retains
A splendid shilling. He nor hears with pain
New oysters cried, nor sighs for cheerful ale.
PHILLIPS.

O' a' the waters that can hobble
A fishing yole or sa'mon coble,
And can reward the fisher's trouble,
Or south or north,
There's nane sae spacious and sae noble,
As Frith o' Forth.

In her the skate and codlin sail;
The eel, fu' souple, wags her tail;
Wi' herrin', fleuk, and mackarel,
And whitens dainty;
Their spindle-shanks the labsters trail,
Wi' partans plenty.

Auld Reekie's sons blythe faces wear;
September's merry month is near,
That brings in Neptune's cauler cheer,
New oysters fresh;
The halesomest and nicest gear
O' fish or flesh.

Oh! then, we needna gie a plack
For dand'rin mountebank or quack,
Wha o' their drogs sae bauldly crack,
And spread sic notions,
As gar their feckless patients tak
Their stinkin' potions.

Come, prie, frail man! for if thou art sick,
The oyster is a rare cathartic,
As ever doctor patient gart lick
To cure his ails;
Whether you hae the head or heart ache,
It never fails.

Ye tipplers! open a' your poses;
Ye wha are fash'd wi' plukie noses,
Fling owre your craig sufficient doses;
You'll thole a hunder,
To fleg awa your simmer roses,
And naething under.

When big as burns the gutters rin,
If ye hae catch'd a droukit skin,

[1] [A well known quick dancing tune.]

To Luckie Middlemist's[1] loup in,
And sit fu' snug
Owre oysters and a dram o' gin,
Or haddock lug.

When auld Saunt Giles, at aught o'clock,
Gars merchant lowns their shopies lock,
There we adjourn wi' hearty fouk
To birle our bodles,
And get wharewi' to crack our joke,
And clear our noddles.

When Phœbus did his winnocks steek,
How aften at that ingle cheek
Did I my frosty fingers beek,
And prie guid fare!
I trow, there was nae hame to seek,
When stechin there.

While glaikit fools, owre rife o' cash,
Pamper their wames wi' fousom trash,
I think a chiel may gaily pass,
He's nae ill bodden,
That gusts his gab wi oyster-sauce,
And hen weel sodden.

At Musselbrough, and eke Newhaven,
The fisherwives will get top livin',
When lads gang out on Sundays' even
To treat their joes,
And take o' fat Pandores[2] a prieven,
Or mussel brose.

Then, sometimes, ere they flit their doup,
They'll aiblins a' their siller coup
For liquor clear frae cutty stoup,
To weet their wizen,
And swallow owre a dainty soup,
For fear they gizzen.

A' ye wha canna staun sae sicker,
When twice you've toom'd the big-mou'd bicker,
Mix cauler oysters wi' your liquor,
And I'm your debtor,
If greedy priest or drouthy vicar
Will thole it better.

BRAID CLAITH.

Ye wha are fain to hae your name
Wrote i' the bonnie book o' fame,
Let merit nae pretension claim
To laurell'd wreath,
But hap ye weel, baith back and wame,
In guid braid claith.

He that some ells o' this may fa',
And slae-black hat on pow like snaw,
Bids bauld to bear the gree awa,
Wi' a' this graith,
When beinly clad wi' shell fu' braw
O' guid braid claith.

Waesucks for him wha has nae feck o't!
For he's a gowk they're sure to geck at;
A chiel that ne'er will be respeckit
While he draws breath,
Till his four quarters are bedeckit
Wi' guid braid claith.[3]

[1] [A famous oyster-tavern of Fergusson's time, situated in the Cowgate, where it is now crossed by the South Bridge.]

[2] [A certain favourite kind of oysters, so called from their being found near the salt-works at Prestonpans.]

[3] [This verse almost appears as an echo of the following passage in *Cibber's Lives of the Poets*:—"Boyse lived obscurely at Edinburgh. His extreme carelessness about his dress was a circumstance very inauspicious to a man who lives in that city. They are such lovers of this kind of decorum, that they will admit of no infringement upon it; and were a man with more wit than Pope, and more philosophy than Newton, to appear at their market-place negligent in his apparel, he would be avoided by his acquaintances, who would rather risk his displeasure than the censure of the public, which would not fail to stigmatise them, for associating with a man seemingly poor; for they measure poverty and riches, understanding, or its opposite, by exterior appearance."]

On Sabbath-days the barber spark,
When he has done wi' scrapin' wark,
Wi' siller broachie in his sark,
Gangs trigly, faith!
Or to the Meadows,[1] or the Park,[2]
In guid braid claith.

Weel might ye trow, to see them there,
That they to shave your haffits bare,
Or curl and sleek a pickle hair,
Would be right laith,
When pacin' wi' a gawsy air
In guid braid claith.

If ony mettled stirrah green
For favour frae a lady's een,
He maunna care for bein' seen
Before he sheath
His body in a scabbard clean
O' guid braid claith.

For, gin he come wi' coat threadbare,
A feg for him she winna care,
But crook her bonny mou fou sair,
And scauld him baith:
Wooers should aye their travel spare,
Without braid claith.

Braid claith lends fouk an unco heeze;
Maks mony kail-worms butterflees;
Gies mony a doctor his degrees,
For little skaith:
In short, you may be what you please,
Wi' guid braid claith.

For tho' ye had as wise a snout on,
As Shakspeare or Sir Isaac Newton,
Your judgment fouk would hae a doubt on,
I'll tak my aith,
Till they could see ye wi' a suit on
O' guid braid claith.

ELEGY
ON THE DEATH OF SCOTS MUSIC.

Mark it, Cæsario! it is old and plain,
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones,
Do use to chant it.—*Shakspeare's Twelfth Night.*

On Scotia's plains, in days of yore,
When lads and lasses tartan wore,
Saft Music rang on ilka shore,
In hamely weed;
But harmony is now no more,
And Music dead.

Round her the feather'd choir would wing;
Sae bonnily she wont to sing,
And sleely wake the sleepin' string,
Their sang to lead,
Sweet as the zephyrs o' the Spring:
But now she's dead.

Mourn, ilka nymph, and ilka swain,
Ilk sunny hill and dowie glen;
Let weepin' streams and naiads drain
Their fountain-head;
Let echo swell the dolefu' strain,
Sin' Music's dead.

When the saft vernal breezes ca'
The grey-hair'd winter fogs awa,
Naebody then is heard to blaw,
Near hill or mead,
On chaunter, or on aiten straw,
Sin' Music's dead.

Nae lasses now, on simmer days,
Will lilt at bleachin' o' their claes;

[1] A promenade to the south of Edinburgh.

[2] The King's Park—another promenade.

Nae herds on Yarrow's bonny braes,
Or banks o' Tweed,
Delight to chaunt their hamely lays,
Sin' Music's dead.

At gloamin, now, the bagpipe's dumb,
When weary owsen hameward come;
Sae sweetly as it wont to bum,
And pibrochs skreed;
We never hear its warlike hum;
For Music's dead.

Macgibbon's[1] gane! ah, waes my heart!
The man in music maist expert;
Wha could sweet melody impart,
And tune the reed,
Wi' sic a slee and pawky art;
But now he's dead.

Ilk carlin now may grunt and grane,
Ilk bonnie lassie mak great maen;
Sin' he's awa, I trow, there's nane
Can fill his stead;
The blythest sangster on the plain!
Alack, he's dead!

Now foreign sonnets bear the gree,
And crabbit, queer variety
O' sounds fresh sprung frae Italy;
A bastard breed!
Unlike that saft-tongued melody,
Which now lies dead.

Could lavrocks, at the dawnin' day,
Could linties, chirmin' frae the spray,
Or todlin' burns, that smoothly play
Owre gowden bed,
Compare wi' "Birks o' Invermay?"
But now they're dead.

Oh Scotland! that could ance afford
To bang the pith o' Roman sword,
Winna your sons, wi' joint accord,
To battle speed,
And fight till Music be restored,
Which now lies dead?

HALLOWFAIR.

At Hallowmas, when nights grow lang,
And starnies shine fu' clear;
When fouk, the nippin' cauld to bang,
Their winter hap-warms wear;
Near Edinbrough a fair there hauds,
I wat there's nane whase name is,
For strappin' dames and sturdy lads,
And cap and stoup, mair famous
Than it that day.

Upon the tap o' ilka lum
The sun began to keek,
And bade the trig-made maidens come
A sightly joe to seek
At Hallowfair, where browsters rare
Keep guid ale on the gantrees,
And dinna scrimp ye o' a skair
O' kebbucks frae their pantreys,
Fu' saut that day.

Here country John, in bonnet blue,
And eke his Sunday's claes on,
Rins after Meg wi' rokelay new,
And sappy kisses lays on:

She'll tauntin' say, "Ye silly coof!
Be o' your gab mair sparin';"
He'll tak the hint, and creish her loof
Wi' what will buy her fairin',
To chow that day.

Here chapman billies tak their stand,
And show their bonny wallies;
Wow! but they lie fu' gleg aff hand
To trick the silly fallows:
Heh, sirs! what cairds and tinklers come,
And ne'er-do-weel horse-coupers,
And spae-wives, fenzying to be dumb,
Wi' a' siclike landloupers,
To thrive that day!

Here Sawny cries, frae Aberdeen,
"Come ye to me fa need;
The brawest shanks that e'er were seen
I'll sell ye cheap and guid:
I wyt they are as pretty hose
As come frae weyr or leem:
Here, tak a rug, and show's your pose;
Forseeth, my ain's but teem
And light the day."

Ye wives, as ye gang through the fair,
O mak your bargains hooly!
O' a' thir wylie louns beware,
Or, fegs! they will ye spulzie.
For fernyear Meg Thomson got
Frae thir mischievous villains,
A scaw'd bit o' a penny note,
That lost a score o' shillin's
To her that day.

The dinlin drums alarm our ears;
The serjeant screechs fu' loud,
"A' gentlemen and volunteers
That wish your country guid,
Come here to me, and I sall gie
Twa guineas and a crown;
A bowl o' punch, that, like the sea,
Will soom a lang dragoon
Wi' ease this day."

Without, the cuissers prance and nicker,
And owre the lea-rig scud;
In tents, the carles bend the bicker,
And rant and roar like wud.
Then there's sic yellochin and din,
Wi' wives and wee-anes gabblin',
That ane might trow they were akin
To a' the tongues at Babylon,
Confused that day.

When Phœbus ligs in Thetis' lap,
Auld Reekie gies them shelter,
Where cadgily they kiss the cap,
And ca't round helter-skelter.
Jock Bell gaed furth to play his freaks;
Great cause he had to rue it;
For frae a stark Lochaber axe[1]
He gat a clamihewit
Fu' sair that night.

"Ohon!" quo' he, "I'd rather be
By sword or bagnet stickit,
Than hae my crown or body wi'
Sic deadly weapon nickit."
Wi' that he gat anither straik
Mair weighty than before,
That gart his feckless body ache,
And spew the reekin' gore
Fu' red that night.

He pechin on the causey lay,
O' kicks and cuffs weel sair'd;
A Highland aith the serjeant gae,
"She man pe see our guard."

[1] ["William Macgibbon was for many years leader of the orchestra of the Gentlemen's Concert at Edinburgh, and was thought to play the music of Correlli, Geminiani, and Handel, with great execution and judgment. His sets of Scotch tunes, with variations and basses, are well known. He composed a set of sonatas or trios for two violins and a bass, which were esteemed good."—*William Tytler, in the Transactions of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries*, vol. i.]

[1] [An ancient weapon, somewhat like a halbert, carried by the city-guard.]

Out spak the weirlike corporal,
"Pring in ta drucken sot:"
They trail'd him ben, and, by my saul,
He paid his drucken groat
For that neist day.

Guid fouk! as ye come frae the fair,
Bide yont frae this black squad;
There's nae sic savages elsewhere
Allow'd to wear cockad'.
Than the strong lion's hungry maw
Or tusk o' Russian bear,
Frae their wanruly felin' paw
Mair cause ye hae to fear
Your death that day.

A wee soup drink does unco weel,
To haud the heart aboon;
It's guid, as lang's a canny chiel
Can staun' steeve in his shoon.
But if a birkie's owre weel sair'd,
It gars him aften stammer
To pleys that bring him to the Guard,
And eke the Council Chaumer,
Wi' shame that day.

ODE TO THE BEE.

Herds! blythesome tune your canty reeds,
And welcome to the gowany meads
The pride o' a' the insect thrang,
A stranger to the green sae lang.
Unfauld ilk buss, and ilka brier,
The bounties o' the gleesome year,
To him whose voice delights the spring;
Whose soughs the saftest slumbers bring.
The trees in simmer cleedin' drest,
The hillocks in their greenest vest,
The brawest flowers rejoiced we see
Disclose their sweets, and ca' on thee,
Blythely to skim on wanton wing
Through a' the fairy haunts o' spring.
When fields hae got their dewy gift,
And dawnin' breaks upon the lift,
Then gang your ways through hight and how,
Seek cauler haugh or sunny knowe,
Or ivy craig, or burn-bank brae,
Where industry shall bid you gae,
For hiney, or for waxen store,
To ding sad poortith frae the door.
Could feckless creature, man, be wise,
The simmer o' his life to prize,
In winter he might fend fu' bauld,
His eild unkenn'd to nippin' cauld;
Yet they, alas! are antrin fouk
That lade their scape wi' winter stock.
Auld age maist feckly glowers right dour
Upon the ailings o' the poor,
Wha hope for nae comforting, save
That dowie, dismal house, the grave.
Then, feeble man! be wise; tak tent
How industry can fetch content:
Behold the bees where'er they wing,
Or through the bonnie bowers o' spring,
Where violets or where roses blaw,
And siller dew-draps nightly fa',
Or when on open bent they're seen,
On heather hill or thristle green;
The hiney's still as sweet that flows
Frae thristle cauld, or kendlin rose.
Frae this the human race may learn
Reflection's hiney'd draps to earn,
Whether they tramp life's thorny way,
Or through the sunny vineyard stray.
Instructive bee! attend me still;
Owre a' my labours sey your skill:
For thee shall hineysuckles rise,
Wi' ladin' to your busy thighs,
And ilka shrub surround my cell,
Whereon ye like to hum and dwell:
My trees in bourachs owre my ground,
Shall fend ye frae ilk blast o' wind;
Nor e'er shall herd, wi' ruthless spike,
Delve out the treasures frae your bike,
But in my fence be safe, and free
To live, and work, and sing, like me.
Like thee, by fancy wing'd, the Muse
Scuds ear' and heartsome owre the dews,
Fu' vogie and fu' blythe to crap
The winsome flowers frae nature's lap,
Twinin' her livin' garlands there,
That lyart time can ne'er impair.

ON SEEING A BUTTERFLY IN THE STREET.

Daft gowk! in macaroni dress,
Are ye come here to shaw your face,
Bowden wi' pride o' simmer gloss,
To cast a dash at Reekie's cross,
And glower at mony a twa-legged creature,
Flees braw by art, though worms by nature?
Like country laird in city cleedin',
Ye're come to town, to lear guid breedin';
To bring ilk darlin' toast and fashion
In vogue amang the flee creation,
That they, like buskit belles and beaux,
May crook their mou fu' sour at those
Whose weird is still to creep, alas!
Unnoticed, 'mang the humble grass;
While you, wi' wings new buskit trim,
Can far frae yird and reptiles skim;
Newfangle grown wi' new-got form,
You soar aboon your mither worm.
Kind Nature lent, but for a day,
Her wings, to mak ye sprush and gay;
In her habiliments a while
Ye may your former sel beguile,
And ding awa' the vexin' thought
O' hourly dwynin' into nought,
By beengin to your foppish brithers,
Black corbies dress'd in peacocks' feathers.
Like thee, they dander here and there,
When simmer's blinks are warm and fair,
And loe to snuff the healthy balm
When e'enin' spreads her wings sae calm;
But when she girns and glowers sae dour
Frae Borean houff in angry shower,
Like thee, they scour frae street or field,
And hap them in a lyther bield;
For they were never made to dree
The adverse gloom o' fortune's ee;
Nor ever pried life's pinin' woes;
Nor pu'd the prickles wi' the rose.
Poor butterfly! thy case I mourn;
To green kail-yard and fruits return,
How could you troke the mavis' note
For "Penny pies, all piping hot?"
Can linties' music be compar'd
Wi' gruntles frae the city guard?
Or can our flowers, at ten hours' bell,
The gowan or the spink excel?
Now should our sclates wi' hailstanes ring,
What cabbage fauld wad screen your wing?
Say, flutterin' fairy, were't thy hap
To light beneath braw Nanny's cap,
Wad she, proud butterfly of May!
In pity, let you skaithless gae?
The furies glancin' frae her een
Wad rug your wings o' siller sheen,
That, wae for thee! far, far outvie
Her Paris artist's finest dye;
Then a' your bonnie spraings wad fall,
And you a worm be left to crawl.
To sic mishanter rins the laird
Who quats his ha'-house and kail-yard;

Grows politician; scours to court,
Where he's the laughin'-stock and sport
O' ministers, wha jeer and jibe,
And heese his hopes wi' thought o' bribe;
Till, in the end, they flae him bare,
Leave him to poortith and to care.
Their fleetchin' words owre late he sees,
He trudges hame—repines—and dies.
Sic be their fa' wha dirk there-ben
In blackest business no their ain;
And may they scaud their lips fu' leal,
That dip their spoons in ither's kail.

ODE TO THE GOWDSPINK.

Frae fields where spring her sweets has blawn
Wi' cauler verdure owre the lawn,
The gowdspink comes in new attire,
The brawest 'mang the whistling choir,
That e'er the sun can clear his een,
Wi' glib notes sain the simmer's green.
Sure, nature herried mony a tree,
For spraings and bonnie spats to thee:
Nae mair the rainbow can impart
Sic glowin' ferlies o' her art,
Whose pencil wrought its freaks at will
On thee, the sey-piece o' her skill.
Nae mair, through straths in simmer dight,
We seek the rose to bless our sight;
Or bid the bonny wa'-flowers sprout
On yonder ruin's lofty snout.
Thy shinin' garments far outstrip
The cherries upon Hebe's lip,
And fool the tints that nature chose
To busk and paint the crimson rose.
'Mang men, wae's heart! we aften find
The brawest dressed want peace o' mind;
While he that gangs wi' ragged coat
Is weel contentit wi' his lot.
When wand, wi' glewy birdlime set,
To steal far off your dautit mate,
Blythe wad you change your cleedin' gay
In lieu of lav'rock's sober grey.
In vain through woods you sair may ban
The envious treachery o' man,
That, wi' your gowden glister taen,
Still hunts you on the simmer's plain,
And traps you 'mang the sudden fa's
O' winter's dreary, dreepin' snaws.
Now steekit frae the gowany field,
Frae ilka fav'rite houff and bield;
But, mergh, alas! to disengage
Your bonnie buik frae fetterin' cage,
Your freeborn bosom beats in vain
For darlin' liberty again.
In window hung, how aft we see
Thee keek around at warblers free,
That carol saft, and sweetly sing
Wi' a' the blytheness o' the spring!
Like Tantalus they hing you here,
To spy the glories o' the year;
And though you're at the burnie's brink,
They downa suffer you to drink.
Ah, Liberty! thou bonny dame,
How wildly wanton is thy stream,
Round whilk the birdies a' rejoice,
And hail you wi' a gratefu' voice!
The gowdspink chatters joyous here,
And courts wi' gleesome sangs his peer;
The mavis, frae the new-bloom'd thorn,
Begins his lauds at ear'est morn;
And herd louns, loupin' owre the grass,
Need far less fleetchin' to their lass,
Than paughty damsels bred at courts,
Wha thraw their mous, and tak the dorts:
But, reft of thee, fient flee we care
For a' that life ahint can spare.
The gowdspink, that sae lang has kenn'd
Thy happy sweets (his wonted friend),
Her sad confinement ill can brook
In some dark chamber's dowie nook.
Though Mary's hand his neb supplies,
Unkenn'd to hunger's painfu' cries,
Even beauty canna cheer the heart
Frae life, frae liberty apart:
For now we tyne its wonted lay,
Sae lightsome sweet, sae blythely gay.
Thus, Fortune aft a curse can gie,
To wile us far frae liberty;
Then tent her syren smiles wha list,
I'll ne'er envy your girnel's grist:
For when fair freedom smiles nae mair,
Care I for life? Shame fa' the hair!
A field o'ergrown wi' rankest stubble,
The essence of a paltry bubble!

CAULER WATER.

When father Adie first pat spade in
The bonnie yard o' ancient Eden,
His amry had nae liquor laid in
To fire his mou;
Nor did he thole his wife's upbraidin',
For bein' fou.

A cauler burn o' siller sheen,
Ran cannily out-owre the green;
And when our gutcher's drouth had been
To bide right sair,
He loutit down, and drank bedeen
A dainty skair.

His bairns had a', before the flood,
A langer tack o' flesh and blood,
And on mair pithy shanks they stood
Than Noah's line,
Wha still hae been a feckless brood,
Wi' drinkin' wine.

The fuddlin' bardies, now-a-days,
Rin maukin-mad in Bacchus' praise;
And limp and stoiter through their lays
Anacreontic,
While each his sea of wine displays
As big's the Pontic.

My Muse will no gang far frae hame,
Or scour a' airths to hound for fame;
In troth, the jillet ye might blame
For thinkin' on't,
When eithly she can find the theme
O' *aquafont*.

This is the name that doctors use,
Their patients' noddles to confuse;
Wi' simples clad in terms abstruse,
They labour still
In kittle words to gar you roose
Their want o' skill.

But we'll hae nae sic clitter-clatter;
And, briefly to expound the matter,
It shall be ca'd guid cauler water;
Than whilk, I trow,
Few drugs in doctors' shops are better
For me or you.

Though joints be stiff as ony rung,
Your pith wi' pain be sairly dung,
Be you in cauler water flung
Out-owre the lugs,
'Twill mak you souple, swack, and young,
Withouten drugs.

Though cholic or the heart-scad teaze us;
Or ony inward dwaam should seize us;
It masters a' sic fell diseases
That would ye spulzie,
And brings them to a canny crisis
Wi' little tulzie.

Were't no for it, the bonnie lasses
Wad glower nae mair in keekin'-glasses;
And soon tyne dint o' a' the graces
That aft conveen
In gleefu' looks, and bonnie faces,
To catch our een.

The fairest, then, might die a maid,
And Cupid quit his shootin' trade;
For wha, through clarty masquerade,
Could then discover
Whether the features under shade
Were worth a lover?

As simmer rains bring simmer flowers,
And leaves to cleed the birken bowers,
Sae beauty gets by cauler showers
Sae rich a bloom,
As for estate, or heavy dowers,
Aft stands in room.

What maks Auld Reekie's dames sae fair?
It canna be the halesome air;
But cauler burn, beyond compare,
The best o' onie,
That gars them a' sic graces skair,
And blink sae bonnie.

On Mayday, in a fairy ring,
We've seen them round St Anthon's spring,[1]
Frae grass the cauler dew-draps wring
To weet their een,
And water, clear as crystal spring,
To synd them clean.

Oh may they still pursue the way
To look sae feat, sae clean, sae gay!
Then shall their beauties glance like May;
And, like her, be
The goddess of the vocal spray,
The Muse and me.

THE SITTING OF THE SESSION.

Phœbus, sair cow'd wi' simmer's hight,
Cowers near the yird wi' blinkin' light,[2]
Cauld shaw the haughs, nae mair bedight
Wi' simmer's claes,
Which heese the heart o' dowie wight
That through them gaes.

Weel leese me o' you, business, now;
For ye'll weet mony a drouthy mou,
That's lang a-gizzenin gane for you,
Withouten fill
O' dribbles frae the guid brown cow,
Or Highland gill.

The Court o' Session, weel wat I,
Pits ilk chiel's whittle i' the pie;
Can criesh the slaw-gaun wheels when dry,
Till session's done;
Though they'll gie mony a cheep and cry,
Or twalt o' June.

Ye benders a'! that dwall in joot,
You'll tak your liquor clean cap out;
Synd your mouse-webs wi' reamin' stout,
While ye hae cash,
And gar your cares a' tak the rout,
And thumb ne'er fash.

Rob Gibb's[3] grey gizz, new frizzled fine,
Will white as ony snaw-ba' shine;
Weel does he loe the lawen coin,
When dossied down,
For whisky gills, or dribs o' wine,
In cauld forenoon.

Bar-keepers! now at outer door,
Tak tent as fouk gang back and fore;
The fient ane there but pays his score;
Nane wins toll-free;
Though ye've a cause the house before,
Or agent be.

Gin ony here wi' canker knocks,
And hasna lowsed his siller pocks,
Ye needna think to fleetch or cox;
"Come, shaw's your gear:
Ae scabbit yowe spills twenty flocks;
Ye's no be here."

Now, at the door, they'll raise a plea;
Crack on, my lads! for flytin's free;
For gin ye should tongue-tackit be,
The mair's the pity,
When scauldin butt and ben we see,
Pendente lite.

The lawyers' shelfs, and printers' presses,
Grain unco sair wi' weighty cases;
The clerk in toil his pleasure places,
To thrive bedeen:
At five hours' bell scribes shaw their faces,
And rake their een.

The country fouk to lawyers crook—
"Ah, weels-me o' your bonny buik!
The benmost part o' my kist-nook
I'll ripe for thee,
And willin' ware my hindmost rook
For my decree."

But law's a draw-well unco deep,
Withouten rim fouk out to keep;
A donnart chiel, when drunk, may dreep
Fu' sleely in,
But finds the gate baith stey and steep,
Ere out he win.

THE RISING OF THE SESSION.

To a' men livin' be it kend,
The Session now is at an end,
Writers! your finger nebs unbend,
And quat the pen,
Till time, wi' lyart pow, shall send
Blythe June again.[1]

Tired o' the law, and a' its phrases,
The wily writers, rich as Crœsus,
Hurl frae the town in hackney chaises,
For country cheer:
The powny that in spring-time grazes,
Thrives a' the year.

Ye lawyers! bid fareweel to lies;
Fareweel to din; fareweel to fees:
The cannie hours o' rest may please,
Instead o' siller;
Hain'd mu'ter hauds the mill at ease,
And fends the miller.

Blythe they may be wha wanton play
In fortune's bonnie blinkin' ray:
Fu' weel can they ding dool away
Wi' comrades couthy,
And never dree a hungert day,
Or e'enin' drouthy.

Ohon the day! for him that's laid
In dowie poortith's cauldrife shade;
Aiblins owre honest for his trade,
He racks his wits
How he may get his buik weel clad,
And fill his guts.

[1] [St Anthony's Well, a beautiful small spring, on Arthur's Seat, near Edinburgh. Thither it is still the practice of young Edinburgh maidens to resort on May-day.]

[2] [The Court of Session was then opened for the winter term on the 12th of November.]

[3] [The keeper of a tavern in the *Outer House*, as the old parliament hall of Edinburgh is denominated, to distinguish it from the Inner House, where the fifteen lords sat in judgment. This Outer House, like Westminster Hall in old times, was then partly occupied by a range of little shops.—See "Reekiana, or Minor Antiquities of Edinburgh."]

[1] [The summer session then commenced on the 12th of June, instead of the 12th of May, as is now the case.]

The farmers' sons, as yap as sparrows,
Are glad, I trow, to flee the barras,
And whistle to the pleugh and harrows
At barley seed:
What writer wadna gang as far as
He could for bread?

After their yokin, I wat weel,
They'll stoo the kebbuck to the heel;
Eith can the pleugh-stilts gar a chiel
Be unco vogie
Clean to lick aff his crowdie-meal,
And scart his cogie.

Now mony a fallow's dung adrift
To a' the blasts beneath the lift;
And though their stamack's aft in tift
In vacance time,
Yet seenil do they ken the rift
O' stappit wame.

Now, if a notar should be wanted,
You'll find *the Pillars*[1] gaily planted:
For little thing protests are granted
Upon a bill,
And weightiest matters covenanted
For half a gill.

Naebody taks a mornin' drib
O' Holland gin frae Robin Gibb;
And, though a dram to Rob's mair sib
Than is his wife,
He maun tak time to daut his rib,
Till siller's rife.

This vacance is a heavy doom
On Indian Peter's coffee-room,[2]
For a' his china pigs are toom;
Nor do we see
In wine the sucker biskets soum,
As light's a flee.

But stop, my Muse! nor mak a mane;
Pate doesna fend on that alane;
He can fell twa dogs wi' ae bane,
While ither fouk
Maun rest themsels content wi' ane,
Nor farer troke.

Ye changehouse keepers! never grumble;
Though you a while your bickers whumble,
Be unco patientfu' and humble,
Nor mak a din,
Though good joot binna kenn'd to rumble
Your wame within.

You needna grudge to draw your breath
For little mair than half a wraith;
Then, if we a' be spared frae death,
We'll gladly prie
Fresh noggins o' your reamin' graith
Wi' blythesome glee.

LEITH RACES.

In July month, ae bonny morn,
When nature's rokelay green
Was spread owre ilka rig o' corn,
To charm our rovin' een;
Glowrin' about, I saw a queen,
The fairest 'neath the lift;
Her een were o' the siller sheen,
Her skin like snawy drift,
Sae white that day.

Quo' she, "I ferly unco sair,
That ye should musin' gae;
Ye wha hae sung o' Hallowfair,
Her winter pranks and play;
When on Leith sands the racers rare
Wi' jockey louns are met,
Their orra pennies there to ware,
And drown themsels in debt
Fu' deep that day."

"And wha are ye, my winsome dear,
That taks the gate sae early?
Where do ye win, if ane may speir;
For I right meikle ferly,
That sic braw buskit laughin' lass
Thir bonny blinks should gie,
And loup, like Hebe, owre the grass,
As wanton, and as free
Frae dool this day?"

"I dwall amang the cauler springs
That weet the Land o' Cakes,
And aften tune my canty strings
At bridals and late wakes.
They ca' me MIRTH;—I ne'er was kenn'd
To grumble or look sour;
But blythe wad be a lift to lend,
If ye wad sey my power
And pith this day."

"A bargain be't; and, by my fegs!
If ye will be my mate,
Wi' you I'll screw the cheery pegs;
Ye shanny find me blate.
We'll reel and ramble through the sands,
And jeer wi' a' we meet:
Nor hip the daft and gleesom bands
That fill Edina's street
Sae thrang this day."

Ere servant-maids had wont to rise
To seethe the breakfast kettle,
Ilk dame her brawest ribbons tries,
To put her on her mettle,
Wi' wiles some silly chiel to trap
(And troth he's fain to get her);
But she'll craw kniefly in his crap,
When, wow! he canna flit her
Frae hame that day.

Now, mony a scaw'd and bare-leg'd loun
Rise early to their wark:
Eneugh to fley a muckle town,
Wi' dinsome squeel and bark.
"Here is the true and faithfu' list
O' noblemen and horses;
Their eild, their weight, their height, their grist,
That rin for plates or purses,
Fu' fleet this day."

To whisky plouks that brunt for ouks
On town-guard sodgers' faces,
Their barber bauld his whittle crooks,
And scrapes them for the races.
Their stumps, erst used to philabegs,
Are dight in spatterdashes,
Whose barken'd hides scarce fend their legs
Frae weet and weary plashes
O' dirt that day.

"Come, hafe a care," the captain cries,
"On guns your bagnets thraw;
Now mind your manual exercise,
And marsh down raw by raw."
And as they march, he'll glower about,
Tent a' their cuts and scars;
'Mang them full mony a gawsy snout
Has gush't in birth-day wars,
Wi' bluid that day.

"Her nainsel maun be carefu' now,
Nor maun she be mislear'd,
Sin' baxter lads hae seal'd a vow,
To skelp and clout the guard."

[1] [An areade skirting the passage leading into the Parliament Close—a great haunt of low writers, as intimated in the text. The great fire of 1824 destroyed the range of buildings which were fronted by *the Pillars*.]

[2] [Peter Williamson, who, like Gibb, kept a small tavern in the *Outer House*. He was a somewhat notable person, having been kidnapped in his boyhood from Aberdeen, and sold to a planter in the American colonies. He lived for several years among the Indians, whose dresses and customs he afterwards exhibited before the citizens of Edinburgh. He was the first to establish a penny post and publish a street directory in the Scottish capital.]

I'm sure Auld Reekie kens o' nane
That would be sorry at it,
Though they should dearly pay the kain,
And get their tails weel sautit,
And sair, thir days.

The tinkler billies i' the Bow,[1]
Are now less eident clinkin',
As lang's their pith or siller dow,
They're daffin' and they're drinkin'.
Bedown Leith Walk what bourrachs reel,
O' ilka trade and station,
That gar their wives and childer feel
Toom wames, for their libation
O' drink thir days!

The browster wives thegither harl
A' trash that they can fa' on;
They rake the grunds o' ilka barrel,
To profit by the lawin:
For weel wat they, a skin leal het
For drinkin' needs nae hire:
At drumbly gear they tak nae pet;
Foul water slockens fire
And drouth, thir days.

They say, ill ale has been the dead
O' mony a bierdly loon;
Then dinna gape like gleds, wi' greed,
To sweel hale bickers down.
Gin Lord send mony ane the morn,
They'll ban fu' sair the time
That e'er they toutit aff the horn,
Which wambles through their wame
Wi' pain that day.

The Buchan bodies, through the beach,
Their bunch o' findrams[2] cry;
And skirl out bauld, in Norlan' speech,
"Guid speldins;—fa will buy?"
And, by my saul, they're nae wrang gear
To gust a stirrah's mou;
Weel staw'd wi' them, he'll never speir
The price o' being fu'
Wi' drink that day.

Now wily wights at rowly-powl,
And flingin' o' the dice,
Here break the banes o' mony a soul
Wi' fa's upon the ice.
At first, the gate seems fair and straught,
Sae they haud fairly till her:
But, wow! in spite o' a' their maught,
They're rookit o' their siller
And gowd thir days.

Around, where'er you fling your een,
The hacks like wind are scourin':
Some chaises honest fouk contain,
And some hae mony a —— in.
Wi' rose and lily, red and white,
They gie themsels sic fit airs,
Like Dian they will seem perfite;
But it's nae gowd that glitters
Wi' them thir days.

The lion here, wi' open paw,
May cleek in mony hunder,
Wha geck at Scotland, and her law,
His wily talons under:
For, ken, though Jamie's laws are auld,
(Thanks to the wise recorder!)
His lion yet roars loud and bauld,
To haud the whigs in order,
Sae prime this day.

To town-guard drum o' clangour clear,
Baith men and steeds are raingit:
Some liveries red or yellow wear,
And some are tartan spraingit.

And now the red—the blue e'en now—
Bids fairest for the market;
But ere the sport be done, I trow,
Their skins are gaily yarkit
And peel'd thir days.

Siclike in Robinhood debates,[1]
When twa chiels hae a pingle;
E'en now some coulie gets his aits,
And dirt wi' words they mingle;
Till up loups he, wi' diction fou',
There's lang and dreech contestin';
For now they're near the point in view—
Now ten miles frae the question
In hand that night.

The races owre, they haill the dules
Wi' drink o' a' kin-kind:
Great feck gae hirplin' hame like fools,
The cripple lead the blind.
May ne'er the canker o' the drink
Mak our bald spirits thrawart,
'Case we get wherewitha' to wink
Wi' een as blue's a blawort,
Wi' straiks thir days!

[1] [The West Bow, a street full of white-iron smiths.]

[2] [Finnan haddocks, or *speldings*, a kind of dried fish, first prepared at the village of Finnan in Kincardineshire.]

THE FARMER'S INGLE.

Et multo imprimis hilarans convivia Baccho,
Ante focum, si frigus erit.—*Virg. Buc.*

When gloamin' grey out-owre the welkin keeks;
When Batie ca's his owsen to the byre;
When Thrasher John, sair dung, his barn-door steeks,
And lusty lasses at the dightin' tire:
What bangs fu' leal the e'enin's coming cauld,
And gars snaw-tappit winter freeze in vain;
Gars dowie mortals look baith blythe and bauld,
Nor fley'd wi' a' the poortith o' the plain;
Begin, my Muse! and chaunt in hamely strain.

Frae the big stack, weel winnow't on the hill,
Wi' divots theekit frae the weet and drift;
Sods, peats, and heathery truffs the chimley fill,
And gar their thickening smeek salute the lift.
The guidman, new come hame, is blythe to find,
When he out-owre the hallan flings his een,
That ilka turn is handled to his mind;
That a' his housie looks sae cosh and clean;
For cleanly house loes he, though e'er so mean.

Weel kens the guidwife that the pleughs require
A heartsome meltith, and refreshing synd
O' nappy liquor, owre a bleezin' fire;
Sair wark and poortith downa weel be join'd.
Wi' butter'd bannocks now the girdle reeks;
I' the far nook the bowie briskly reams;
The readied kail stands by the chimley cheeks,
And hauds the riggin het wi' welcome streams,
Whilk than the daintiest kitchen nicer seems.

Frae this let gentler gabs a lesson lear:
Wad they to labouring lend an eident hand,
They'd rax fell strang upon the simplest fare,
Nor find their stamacks ever at a stand.
Fu' hale and healthy wad they pass the day;
At night in calmest slumbers dose fu' sound;
Nor doctor need their weary life to spae,
Nor drogs their noddle and their sense confound,
Till death slip sleely on, and gie the hindmost wound.

On sicken food has mony a doughty deed
By Caledonia's ancestors been done;
By this did mony a wight fu' weirlike bleed
In brulzies frae the dawn to set o' sun.
'Twas this that braced their gardies stiff and strang,
That bent the deadly yew in ancient days;
Laid Denmark's daring sons on yird alang;
Gar'd Scottish thristles bang the Roman bays;
For near our coast their heads they doughtna raise.

[1] [Alluding to a debating-club of that name in Edinburgh.]

The couthy cracks begin when supper's owre;
The cheering bicker gars them glibly gash
O' simmer's showery blinks, and winters sour,
Whose floods did erst their mailin's produce hash.
'Bout kirk and market eke their tales gae on;
How Jock woo'd Jenny here to be his bride;
And there how Marion, for a bastard son,
Upon the cutty stool was forced to ride,
The waefu' scauld o' our Mess John to bide.

The fient a cheep's amang the bairnies now,
For a' their anger's wi' their hunger gane:
Aye maun the childer, wi' a fastin mou,
Grumble and greet, and mak an unco mane.
In rangles round, before the ingle's lowe,
Frae guidame's mouth auld warld tales they hear,
O' warlocks loupin' round the wirrikow;
O' ghaists, that win in glen and kirk-yard drear;
Whilk touzles a' their tap, and gars them shake wi' fear!

For weel she trows, that fiends and fairies be
Sent frae the deil to fleetch us to our ill;
That kye hae tint their milk wi' evil ee,
And corn been scowder'd on the glowin' kill.
Oh mock na this, my friends, but rather mourn,
Ye in life's brawest spring, wi' reason clear;
Wi' eild our idle fancies a' return,
And dim our dolefu' days wi' bairnly fear;
The mind's aye cradled when the grave is near.

Yet thrift, industrious, bides her latest days,
Though age her sair-dow'd front wi' runkles wave;
Yet frae the russet lap the spindle plays,
Her e'enin' stent reels she as weel's the lave.
On some feast-day, the wee things busket braw,
Shall heeze her heart up wi' a silent joy,
Fu' cadgie that her head was up and saw
Her ain spun cleedin' on a darling oye:[1]
Careless tho' death should mak the feast her foy.

In its auld lerroch yet the deas remains,
Where the guidman aft streeks him at his ease;
A warm and canny lean for weary banes
O' labourers dyolt upon the weary leas.
Round him will baudrons and the collie come,
To wag their tail, and cast a thankfu' ee
To him wha kindly throws them mony a crum
O' kebbuck whang'd, and dainty fadge, to pree;
This a' the boon they crave, and a' the fee.

Frae him the lads their mornin' counsel tak—
What stacks he wants to thrash, what rigs to till;
How big a birn maun lie on Bassie's back,
For meal and mu'ter to the thirlin mill.
Neist, the guidwife her hirelin' damsels bids
Glow'r through the byre, and see the hawkies bound;
Tak tent, case Crummy tak her wonted tids,
And ca' the laiglen's treasure on the ground;
Whilk spills a kebbuck nice or yellow pound.

Then a' the house for sleep begin to grien,
Their joints to slack frae industry a while;
The leaden god fa's heavy on their een,
And hafflins steeks them frae their daily toil:
The cruizy, too, can only blink and bleer,
The reistit ingle's done the maist it dow;
Tacksman and cottar eke to bed maun steer,
Upon the cod to clear their drumly pow,
Till waken'd by the dawnin's ruddy glow.

Peace to the husbandman, and a' his tribe,
Whase care fells a' our wants frae year to year!
Lang may his sock and cou'ter turn the glebe,
And banks o' corn bend down wi' laded ear!
May Scotia's simmers aye look gay and green;
Her yellow hairsts frae scowry blasts decreed!
May a' her tenants sit fu' snug and bien,
Frae the hard grip o' ails and poortith freed—
And a lang lasting train o' peacefu' hours succeed!

[1] Grandchild.

THE ELECTION.[1]

Nunc est bibendum, et bendere Bickerum magnum;
Cavete town-guardum, Dougal Geddum atque Campbellum.[2]

Rejoice, ye burghers! ane and a',
Lang look'd for's come at last;
Sair were your backs held to the wa',
Wi' poortith and wi' fast.
Now ye may clap your wings and craw,
And gaily busk ilk feather,
For deacon cocks hae pass'd a law,
To rax and weet your leather
Wi' drink thir days.

"Haste, Epps!" quo' John, "and bring my gizz;
Tak tent ye dinna't spulzie;
Last night the barber gae't a frizz,
And straikit it wi' ulzie.
Hae done your parritch, lassie, Lizz!
Gie me my sark and gravat;
I'se be as braw's the deacon is,
When he taks affidavit
O' faith the day."

"Where's Johnny gaun," cries neebour Bess,
"That he's sae gaily bodin,
Wi' new-kaimed wig, weel syndet face,
Silk hose for hamely hodin?"
"Our Johnny's nae sma' drink, you'll guess;
He's trig as ony muircock,
And forth to mak a deacon, lass;
He downa speak to poor fouk
Like us the day."

The coat ben-by i' the kist-nook,
That's been this townonth swarmin',
Is brought ance mair thereout to look,
To fleg awa the vermin.
Menzies o' moths and flaes are shook,
And i' the floor they howder,
Till, in a birn, beneath the crook,
They're singit wi' a scowder
To death that day.

The canty cobbler quats his sta',
His roset and his lingans;
His buik has dree'd a sair, sair fa',
Frae meals o' bread and ingans.
Now he's a pow o' wit and law,
And taunts at soles and heels;
To Walker's[3] he can rin awa,
There whang his creams and jeels
Wi' life that day.

The lads in order tak their seat;
(The deil may claw the clungest!)
They stech and connach sae the meat,
Their teeth mak mair than tongue haste.
Their claes sae cleanly tight and feat,
And eke their craw-black beavers,
Like maisters' mous hae fund the gate
To tassels teugh wi' slavers
Fu' lang that day.

The dinner done—for brandy strang
They cry, to weet their thrapple;
To gar the stamack bide the bang,
And wi' its ladin' grapple.
The grace is said—it's no owre lang—
The claret reams in bells.
Quo' deacon, "Let the toast round gang—
Come—Here's our Noble Sel's
Weel met the day!"

[1] [The election of magistrates for the city of Edinburgh is here the subject. The ceremony took place at Michaelmas.]

[2] [Dougal Ged and Campbell were officers of the town-guard, at whom the poet never loses an opportunity of jeering. This Ged was a relative, probably a brother, of the Patrick Ged who befriended Commodore Byron in his misfortunes.—See Byron's Narrative.]

[3] [The hotel where the entertainment took place after the election.]

"Weels-me o' drink," quo' cooper Will,
"My barrel has been geyz'd aye,
And hasna gotten sic a fill,
Sin' fou' on Hansel-Teysday.
But maksna—now it's got a sweel;
Ae gird I shanna cast, lad!
Or else I wish the horn'd deil
May Will wi' kittle cast dad
To hell the day!"

The magistrates fu' wily are,
Their lamps are gaily blinkin';
But they might as lieve burn elsewhere,
When fouk's blind fou wi' drinkin'.
Our deacon wadna ca' a chair—
The Foul ane durst him na-say!—
He took shanks-naig—but, fient may care!
He hindwards kiss'd the cawsey
Wi' bir that night.

Weel leese-me o' you, souter Jock!—
For tricks ye buit be tryin';
When grapin' for his ain bed-stock,
He fa's where Will's wife's lyin':—
Will comin' hame wi' ither fouk,
He saw Jock there before him;
Wi' maister laiglen, like a brock,
He did wi' stink maist smoor him,
Fu' strang that night.

Then wi' a souple leathern whang
He gart them fidge and girn aye,
"Faith, chiel! ye's no for naething gang,
Gin ye maun reel my pirny."
Syne wi' a muckle elshin lang
He brogit Maggie's hurdies;
And, cause he thought her i' the wrang,
There passed nae bonnie wordies
'Tween them that night.

Now, had some laird his lady fand
In sic unseemly courses,
It might hae lows'd the haly band
Wi' law-suits and divorces:
But the neist day they a' shook hands,
And ilka crack did sowder;
While Meg for drink her apron pawns,
For a' the guidman cow'd her,
Whan fou last night.

Glower round the cawsey, up and down,
What mobbin' and what plottin'!
Here, politicians bribe a loun
Against his saul for votin'.
The gowd that inlakes half-a-crown,
Thir blades lug out to try them;
They pouch the gowd, nor fash the town
For weights and scales to weigh them
Exact that day.

Then deacons at the council stent
To get themselves presentit;
For towmonths twa their saul is lent,
For the town's guid indentit.
Lang's their debatin' thereanent,
About protests they're bauthrin';
While Sandy Fife, to mak content,
On bells[1] plays "Clout the Caudron"
To them that day.

Ye louns! that troke in doctors' stuff,
You'll now hae unco slaisters;
When windy blaws their stamacks puff,
They'll need baith pills and plaisters:
For though, e'en now, they look right bluff,
Sic drinks, ere hillocks meet,
Will hap some deacons in a truff,
Inrow'd i' the lang leet[2]
O' death yon night.

[1] [A set of music bells in St Giles's steeple.]

[2] [In the business of an Edinburgh municipal election, according to the old mode, a large list of eligible persons first presented by the trades, that the magistrates might shorten it, was called the *long leet*. When abridged, it was called the *short leet*. The word is from the French *élite*, choice persons. Death's endless list is here, with happy humour, called his *lang leet*.]

TO THE TRON-KIRK BELL.

Wanwordy, crazy, dinsome thing,
As e'er was fram'd to jow or ring!
What gar'd them sic in steeple hing,
They ken themsel;
But weel wat I, they couldna bring
Waur sounds frae hell.

What deil are ye? that I should ban;
You're neither kin to pat nor pan;
Nor ulzie pig, nor maister-can,
But weel may gie
Mair pleasure to the ear o' man
Than stroke o' thee.

Fleece-merchants may look bauld, I trow,
Sin' a' Auld Reekie's childer now
Maun staup their lugs wi' teats o' woo,
Thy sound to bang,
And keep it frae gaun through and through
Wi' jarrin' twang.

Your noisy tongue, there's nae abidin't;
Like scauldin' wife's, there is nae guidin't;
When I'm 'bout ony business eident,
It's sair to thole;
To deave me, then, ye tak a pride in't,
Wi' senseless knoll.

Oh! were I provost o' the town,
I swear by a' the powers aboon,
I'd bring ye wi' a reesle down;
Nor should you think
(Sae sair I'd crack and clour your crown)
Again to clink.

For, when I've toom'd the meikle cap,
And fain would fa' owre in a nap,
Troth, I could doze as sound's a tap,
Were't no for thee,
That gies the tither weary chap
To wauken me.

I dreamt ae night I saw Auld Nick:
Quo' he—"This bell o' mine's a trick,
A wily piece o' politic,
A cunnin' snare,
To trap fouk in a cloven stick,
Ere they're aware.

"As lang's my dautit bell hings there,
A' body at the kirk will skar:
Quo' they, if he that preaches there
Like it can wound,
We downa care a single hair
For joyfu' sound."

If magistrates wi' me would 'gree
For aye tongue-tackit should you be;
Nor fleg wi' anti-melody
Sic honest fouk,
Whase lugs were never made to dree
Thy dolefu' shock.

But far frae thee the bailies dwell,
Or they would scunner at your knell;
Gie the foul thief his riven bell,
And then, I trow,
The byword hauds, "The deil himsel
Has got his due."[1]

[1] [The Tron Church, in the High Street of Edinburgh, was built in 1647, but not completely finished till 1663. Its bell, which cost 1400 merks, or £82, 10s. 2⅔d., was put up in 1673. This useful, but, if we are to believe Fergusson, unpleasant servant of the public, came to an untimely end, November 16, 1824, when, the steeple having caught fire in the midst of the wide-spread conflagration which then befell the city, the bell was melted by the flames, and fell in masses upon the floor below. Many citizens of Edinburgh, from an affectionate regard for the object of Fergusson's whimsical vituperations, obtained pieces of the metal from which they formed cups, hand-bells, and other such utensils, with commemorative inscriptions. Such was the end of this "wanwordy, crazy, dinsome thing."]

MUTUAL COMPLAINT OF PLAINSTANES AND CAUSEWAY,

IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE.

Sin' Marlin[1] laid Auld Reekie's cawsey,
And made her o' his wark right saucy,
The spacious street and guid plainstanes
Were never kenn'd to crack but ance;
Whilk happen'd on the hinder night,
When Fraser's[2] ulzie tint its light.
O' Highland sentries nane were waukin'
To hear their cronies glibly taukin';
For them this wonder might hae rotten,
And, like night robbery, been forgotten,
Hadna a cadie[3] wi' his lantern,
Been gleg enough to hear them bant'rin',
Wha cam to me neist mornin' early,
To gie me tidings o' this ferly.
Ye tauntin' louns, trow this nae joke,
For ance the ass o' Balaam spoke,
Better than lawyers do, forsooth;
For it spak naething but the truth!
Whether they follow its example,
You'll ken best when you hear the sample.

PLAINSTANES.

My friend! thir hunder years, and mair,
We've been forfoughen late and ear';
In sunshine and in weety weather,
Our thrawart lot we bure thegither.
I never growled, but was content
When ilk ane had an equal stent;
But now to flyte I'se e'en be bauld.
When I'm wi' sic a grievance thrall'd.
How haps it, say, that mealy bakers,
Hair-kaimers, crieshy gizzy-makers,
Should a' get leave to waste their pouthers
Upon my beaux' and ladies' shouthers?
My travellers are fley'd to dead
Wi' creels wanchancy, heap'd wi' bread,
Frae whilk hing down uncanny nicksticks,
That aften gie the maidens sic licks,
As mak them blythe to screen their faces
Wi' hats and muckle maun bon-graces,
And cheat the lads that fain would see
The glances o' a pawky ee,
Or gie their loves a wily wink,
That erst might lend their hearts a clink!
Speak, was I made to dree the ladin'
O' Gaelic chairman's heavy treadin',
Wha in my tender buik bore holes
Wi' waefu' tackets i' the soles
O' brogs, whilk on my body tramp,
And wound like death at ilka clamp?

CAWSEY.

Weel crackit, friend!—It aft hauds true,
'Bout naething fouk mak maist ado.
Weel ken ye, though ye doughtna tell,
I pay the sairist kain mysel.
Owre me, ilk day, big waggons rumble,
And a' my fabric birze and jumble.
Owre me the muckle horses gallop,
Eneugh to rug my very saul up;
And coachmen never trow they're sinnin',
While down the street their wheels are spinnin'.
Like thee, do I not bide the brunt
O' Highland chairmen's heavy dunt?
Yet I hae never thought o' breathing
Complaint, or makin' din for naething.

[1] [There is a tradition in Edinburgh, noticed by Maitland, that the High Street was first paved by a Frenchman named Marlin, from whom a wynd or alley near the Tron Church took its name, in consequence of his having been buried at the head of it under his own work. A peculiar arrangement of the stones marked the spot where Marlin was understood to lie, down to a period within the recollection of old people.]

[2] The contractor for the lamps.

[3] [Street-messengers bore this name in Edinburgh.]

PLAINSTANES.

Haud sae, and let me get a word in.
Your back's best fitted for the burden:
And I can eithly tell you why—
Ye're doughtier by far than I:
For whinstanes houkit frae the Craigs[1]
May thole the prancin' feet o' naigs,
Nor ever fear uncanny hotches
Frae clumsy carts or hackney coaches;
While I, a weak and feckless creature,
Am moulded by a safter nature.
Wi' mason's chisel dighted neat,
To gar me look baith clean and feat,
I scarce can bear a sairer thump
Than comes frae sole of shoe or pump.
I grant, indeed, that now and then,
Yield to a patten's pith I maun;
But pattens, though they're aften plenty,
Are aye laid down wi' feet fu' tenty;
And strokes frae ladies, though they're teazin',
I freely maun avow are pleasin'.
For what use was I made, I wonder?
It wasna tamely to chap under
The weight o' ilka codroch chiel,
That does my skin to targets peel.
But if I guess aright, my trade is
To fend frae skaith the bonnie ladies;
To keep the barnies free frae harms
When airin' i' their nurses' arms;
To be a safe and canny bield
For growin' youth or droopin' eild.
Tak then frae me the heavy load
O' burden-bearers heavy shod;
Or, by my troth, the guid auld town sall
Hae this affair before the Council.

CAWSEY.

I dinna care a single jot,
Though summon'd by a shellycoat;
Sae leally I'll propone defences,
As get ye flung for my expenses.
Your libel I'll impugn *verbatim*,
And hae a *magnum damnum datum:*
For though frae Arthur's-Seat I sprang,
I am in constitution strang.
Would it no fret the hardest stane
Beneath the Luckenbooths to grane?
Though magistrates the Cross[2] discard,
It maksna when they leave the guard—
A lumbersome and stinkin' biggin',
That rides the sairest on my riggin'.
Poor me ower meikle do ye blame
For tradesmen trampin' on your wame;
Yet a' your advocates and braw fouk,
Come still to me 'twixt ane and twa 'clock,
And never yet were kenn'd to range
At Charlie's statue or Exchange.[3]
Then tak your beaux and macaronies;
Gie me trades fouk and country Johnnies;
The diel's in't gin ye dinna sign
Your sentiments conjunct wi' mine.

PLAINSTANES.

Gin we twa could be as auldfarrant
As gar the council gie a warrant,
Ilk loun rebellious to tak
Wha walks no i' the proper track,
And o' three shillin's Scottish suck him,
Or in the water-hole sair douk him;
This might assist the poor's collection,
And gie baith parties satisfaction.

[1] [Salisbury Crags, [illegible] Edinburgh.]

[2] [The market-cross had been removed in 1752. The Town-guard-house, a clumsy building in the middle of the High Street, was allowed to remain till 1788, though much more incommodious.]

[3] [Two places, laid with *plainstanes* for the convenience of the merchants, who, however, could never be prevailed on to take advantage of them, but held to their old haunt on the *cawsey* near the Cross.]

CAWSEY.

But first, I think, it will be good
To bring it to the Robinhood,[1]
Where we sall hae the question stated,
And keen and crabbetly debated—
Whether the provost and the bailies,
For the town's guid whase daily toil is,
Should listen to our joint petitions,
And see obtemper'd the conditions.

PLAINSTANES.

Content am I. But east the gate is
The sun, wha taks his leave o' Thetis,
And comes to wauken honest fouk,
That gang to wark at sax o'clock.
It sets us to be dumb a while,
And let our words gie place to toil.

A DRINK ECLOGUE.

LANDLADY, BRANDY, AND WHISKY.

On auld worm-eaten skelf, in cellar dunk,
Where hearty benders synd their drouthy trunk,
Twa chappin bottles bang'd wi' liquor fu'—
Brandy the tane, the tither whisky blue—
Grew canker'd; for the twa were het within,
And het-skinn'd fouk to flytin soon begin.
The Frenchman fizz'd, and first wad foot the field,
While paughty Scotsman scorn'd to beenge or yield.

BRANDY.

Black be your fa', ye cottar loon mislear'd!
Blawn by the porters, chairmen, city guard:
Hae ye nae breedin', that ye cock your nose
Against my sweetly gusted cordial dose!
I've been near pawky courts, and, aften there,
Hae ca'd hysterics frae the dowie fair;
And courtiers aft gaed greinin for my smack,
To gar them bauldly glower and gashly crack.
The priest, to bang mishanters black, and cares,
Has sought me in his closet for his prayers.
What tid then taks the fates, that they can thole
Thrawart to fix me i' this weary hole,
Sair fash'd wi' din, wi' darkness, and wi' stinks,
Where cheery daylight through the mirk ne'er blinks?

WHISKY.

But ye maun be content, and maunna rue,
Though erst ye've bizz'd in bonnie madam's mou.
Wi' thoughts like thae, your heart may sairly dunt:
The warld's now changed; it's no like use and wont:
For here, wae's me! there's nouther lord nor laird
Comes to get heart-scad frae their stamack skared.
Nae mair your courtier louns will shaw their face,
For they glower eery at a friend's disgrace.
But heese your heart up:—When at court you hear
The patriot's thrapple wat wi' reamin' beer;
When chairman, weary wi' his daily gain,
Can synd his whistle wi' the clear champaign;
Be hopefu', for the time will soon row round,
When you'll nae langer dwall beneath the ground.

BRANDY.

Wanwordy gowk! did I sae aften shine
Wi' gowden glister through the crystal fine,
To thole your taunts, that seenil hae been seen
Awa frae luggie, quegh, or truncher treein;
Gif honour would but let, a challenge should
Twine ye o' Highland tongue and Highland bluid;
Wi' cairds like thee I scorn to file my thumb;
For gentle spirits gentle breedin' doom.

WHISKY.

Truly, I think it right you get your alms;
Your high heart humbled amang common drams.
Braw days for you, when fools, newfangle fain,
Like ither countries better than their ain:
For there, ye never saw sic chancy days,
Sic balls, assemblies, operas, or plays.
Hame-owre, langsyne, you hae been blythe to pack
Your a' upon a sarkless sodger's back.
For you, thir lads, as weel-lear'd travellers tell,
Had sell'd their sarks, gin sarks they'd had to sell.
But worth gets poortith, and black burnin' shame
To daunt and drivel out a life at hame.
Alake! the byword's owre weel kenn'd throughout,
"Prophets at hame are held in nae repute."
Sae farest wi' me, though I can heat the skin,
And set the saul upon a merry pin;
Yet I am hameil; there's the sour mischance!
I'm no frae Turkey, Italy, or France:
For now, our gentles' gabs are grown sae nice,
At thee they tout, and never spier my price.
Witness;—for thee they height their tenants' rent,
And fill their lands wi' poortith, discontent;—
Gar them owre seas for cheaper mailins hunt,
And leave their ain as bare's the Cairn-o'-Mount.[1]

BRANDY.

Though lairds tak toothfu's o' my warmin' sap,
This dwines not tenant's gear, nor cows their crap.
For love to you, there's mony a tenant gaes
Ill clad and barefoot owre the Highland braes;
For you, nae mair the thrifty guidwife sees
Her lasses kirn, or birze the dainty cheese;
Crummie nae mair for Jenny's hand will crune
Wi' milkness dreepin' frae her teats adown;
For you, owre ear' the ox his fate partakes,
And fa's a victim to the bluidy axe.

WHISKY.

Wha is't that gars the greedy bankers prieve
The maiden's tocher but the maiden's leave?
By you, when spulzied o' her charmin' pose,
She tholes, in turn, the taunt o' cauldrife joes.
Wi' skelps like this, fouk sit but seenil down
To wather-gammon, or howtowdy brown.
Sair dung wi' dule, and fley'd for comin' debt,
They gar their mou-bits wi' their incomes met;
Content eneugh, if they hae wherewithal
Scrimply to tack their body and their saul.

BRANDY.

Frae some poor poet, owre as poor a pot,
Ye've lear'd to crack sae crouse, ye haveril Scot;
Or burgher politician, that imbrues
His tongue in thee, and reads the claikin news:
But, wae's heart for you! that for aye maun dwell
In poet's garret or in chairman's cell,
While I shall yet on bien-clad tables stand,
Bouden wi' a' the daintiths o' the land.

WHISKY.

Troth, I hae been, ere now, the poet's flame,
And hees'd his sangs to mony blythesome theme.
Wha was't gar'd Allie's chaunter chirm fu' clear;
Life to the saul, and music to the ear?
Nae stream but kens, and can repeat the lay
To shepherds streekit on the simmer brae,
Wha to their whistle wi' the lavrock bang,
To wauken flocks the rural fields amang.

BRANDY.

But here's the browster wife, and she can tell
Wha's won the day, and wha should bear the bell.
Hae done your din, and let her judgment join
In final verdict 'twixt your plea and mine.

LANDLADY.

In days o' yore, I could my livin' prize,
Nor fash'd wi' dolefu' gaugers or excise;
But, now-a-days, we're blythe to lear the thrift
Our heads 'boon licence and excise to lift.
Inlakes o' brandy we can soon supply
By whisky tinctured wi' the saffron's dye.

[1] A debating-society, afterwards called the Pantheon.

[1] [A noted member of the Grampian range.]

Will ye your breedin' threep, ye mongrel loun!
Frae hamebred liquor dyed to colour brown?
So, flunky braw, when dress'd in master's claes,
Struts to Auld Reekie's Cross on sunny days,
Till some auld comrade, aiblins out o' place,
Near the vain upstart shaws his meagre face;
Bumbazed he loups frae sight, and jooks his ken,
Fley'd to be seen amang the tassell'd train.

TO THE PRINCIPAL AND PROFESSORS

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREW'S, ON THEIR SUPERB TREAT TO DR SAMUEL JOHNSON.[1]

St Andrew's town may look right gawsy;
Nae grass will grow upon her cawsey,
Nor wa'-flower o' a yellow dye,
Glower dowie owre her ruins high;
Sin' Samy's head, weel pang'd wi' lear,
Has seen the Alma Mater there.
Regents! my winsome billy boys!
'Bout him you've made an unco noise:
Nae doubt, for him your bells wad clink
To find him upon Eden's[2] brink;
And a' things nicely set in order,
Wad keep him on the Fifan border,
I'se warrant, now, frae France and Spain
Baith cooks and scullions, mony ane,
Wad gar the pats and kettles tingle
Around the college kitchen ingle,
To fleg frae a' your craigs the roup
Wi' reekin het and creeshy soup;
And snails and puddocks mony hunder
Wad beekin' lie the hearthstane under;
Wi' roast and boil'd and a' kin-kind,
To heat the body, cool the mind.
But hear, my lads! gin I'd been there,
How I'd hae trimm'd the bill o' fare!
For ne'er sic surly wight as he
Had met wi' sic respect frae me.
Mind ye what Sam, the lying loun,
Has in his dictionar laid down?—
That aits, in England, are a feast
To cow and horse, and sicken beast;
While, in Scots ground, this growth was common
To gust the gab o' man and woman.
Tak tent, ye regents! then, and hear
My list o' guidly hameil gear,
Sic as hae aften rax'd the wame
O' blyther fallows mony time:
Mair hardy, souple, steeve, and swank,
Than ever stood on Samy's shank.
Imprimis, then, a haggis fat,
Weel tottled in a seethin' pat,
Wi' spice and ingans weel ca'd through,
Had help'd to gust the stirrah's mou,
And placed itsel in truncher clean
Before the gilpy's glowrin' een.
Secundo, then, a guid sheep's head,
Whase hide was singit, never flead,
And four black trotters clad wi' girsle,
Bedown his throat had learn'd to hirsle.
What think ye, neist, o' guid fat brose
To clag his ribs! a dainty dose!
And white and bluidy puddings routh,
To gar the doctor skirl o' drouth;
When he could never hope to merit
A cordial glass o' reamin' claret,
But thraw his nose, and birze, and pegh,
Owre the contents o' sma' ale quegh.
Then let his wisdom girn and snarl
Owre a weel-tostit girdle farl,
And learn, that, maugre o' his wame,
Ill bairns are aye best haud at hame.
Drummond, lang syne, o' Hawthornden,
The wilyest and best o' men,
Has gien you dishes ane or mae,
That wad hae gar'd his grinders play,
Not to "Roast Beef,"[1] old England's life,
But to the auld "East Nook o' Fife,"[1]
Where Craillian crafts could weel hae gien
Skate rumples to hae clear'd his een;
Then, neist, when Samy's heart was faintin',
He'd lang'd for skate to mak him wanton.
Ah, willawins for Scotland now!
When she maun stap ilk birky's mou
Wi' eistacks, grown, as 'twere in pet,
In foreign land, or green-house het,
When cog o' brose, and cutty spoon,
Is a' your cottar childer's boon,
Who, through the week, till Sunday's peal,
Toil for pease cods and guid lang kail.
Devall then, sirs, and never send
For dainties to regale a friend;
Or, like a torch at baith ends burnin',
Your house will soon grow mirk and mournin'!
What's this I hear some cynic say?[2]
Robin, ye loun! it's nae fair play;
Is there nae ither subject rife
To clap your thumb upon but Fife?
Gie owre, young man! you'll meet your cornin',
Than caption waur, or charge o' hornin'.
Some canker'd, surly, sour-mou'd carlin,
Bred near the abbey o' Dunfermline,
Your shouthers yet may gie a lounder,
And be o' verse the mal-confounder.
Come on, ye blades! but, ere ye tulzie,
Or hack our flesh wi' sword or gullie,
Ne'er shaw your teeth, nor look like stink,
Nor owre an empty bicker blink:
What weets the wizen and the wame,
Will mend your prose, and heal my rhyme.

ELEGY ON JOHN HOGG,

LATE PORTER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS.

Death! what's ado? the diel-be-licket,
Or wi' your stang you ne'er had pricket,
Or our auld *Alma Mater* tricket
O' poor John Hogg,
And trail'd him ben through your mark wicket,
As dead's a log.

Now ilka glaiket scholar loun
May daunder wae wi' duddy gown;
Kate Kennedy[3] to dowie crune
May mourn and clink,
And steeples o' Saunt Andrew's town
To yird may sink.

Sin' Pauly Tam,[4] wi' canker'd snout,
First held the students in about,
To wear their claes as black as soot
They ne'er had reason,
Till death John's haffit gae a clout,
Sae out o' season.

When regents met at common schools,
He taught auld Tam to hail the dules,
And eident to row right the bowls,
Like ony emmack;
He kept us a' within the rules
Strict academic.

[1] ["The professors entertained us with a very good dinner. Present: Murison, Shaw, Cooke, Hill, Haddo, Watson, Flint, Brown."—*Boswell's Tour to the Hebrides, Sub Thursday, 19th August* (1773).]

[2] [A river near St Andrews.]

[1] Alluding to two tunes under these titles.

[2] The poet alludes to a gentleman in Dunfermline, who sent him a challenge, being highly offended at the concluding reflection in the "Expedition to Fife."

[3] A bell in the college steeple.

[4] A name given by the students to one of the members of the university.

Heh! wha will tell the students now
To meet the Pauly cheek for chow,
When he, like frightsome wirrikow,
Had wont to rail,
And set our stamacks in a low,
Or we turn'd tail?

Ah, Johnny! aften did I grumble
Frae cozy bed fu' ear' to tumble,
When art and part I'd been in some ill,
Troth, I was swear;
His words they brodit like a wumill,
Frae ear to ear.

When I had been fu' laith to rise,
John then begude to moralise:
"The tither nap, the sluggard cries,
And turns him round;
Sae spak auld Solomon the wise,
Divine profound!"

Nae dominie, or wise Mess John,
Was better lear'd in Solomon;
He cited proverbs, one by one,
Ilk vice to tame;
He gar'd ilk sinner sigh and groan,
And fear hell's flame.

"I hae nae meikle skill," quo' he,
"In what you ca' philosophy;
It tells, that baith the earth and sea
Rin round about;
Either the Bible tells a lie,
Or ye're a' out.

"It's i' the Psalms o' David writ,
That this wide warld ne'er should flit,
But on the waters coshly sit
Fu' steeve and lastin':
And wasna he a head o' wit,
At sic contestin'?"

On e'enin's cauld wi' glee we'd trudge,
To heat our shins in Johnny's lodge;
The deil ane thought his bum to budge,
Wi' siller on us;
To claw het pints we'd never grudge
O' *molationis*.

Say, ye red gowns! that aften, here,
Hae toasted cakes to Katie's beer,
Gin e'er thir days hae had their peer,
Sae blythe, sae daft?
You'll ne'er again, in life's career,
Sit half sae saft.

Wi' haffit locks, sae smooth and sleek,
John look'd like ony ancient Greek;
He was a Naz'rene a' the week,
And doughtna tell out
A bawbee Scots to scrape his cheek,
Till Sunday fell out.

For John aye loed to turn the pence;
Though poortith was a great offence:
"What recks, though ye ken mood and tense?
A hungry wame
For gowd wad wi' them baith dispense,
At ony time.

"Ye ken what ails maun aye befall
The chiel that will be prodigal;
When waisted to the very spaul
He turns his tusk
(For want o' comfort to his saul)
To hungry husk."

Ye royit louns! just do as he'd do:
For mony braw green shaw and meadow
He's left to cheer his dowie widow,
His winsome Kate,
That to him proved a canny she-dow,
Baith ear' and late.

AN ECLOGUE

TO THE MEMORY OF DR WILKIE, LATE PROFESSOR OF NATURAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS.

[William Wilkie, D.D., born 1721, died 1772, enjoyed some temporary fame as a poet and wit. He was the author of an epic in the manner of Homer, entitled the *Epigoniad*, long forgotten. Fergusson had been his pupil, and probably owed some obligations to him.]

GEORDIE AND DAVIE.

GEORDIE.

Blaw saft, my reed, and kindly, to my mane;
Weel may ye thole a saft and dowie strain.
Nae mair to you shall shepherds, in a ring,
Wi' blytheness skip, or lasses lilt and sing;
Sic sorrow now maun sadden ilka ee,
And ilka waefu' shepherd grieve wi' me.

DAVIE.

Wherefore begin a sad and dowie strain,
Or banish liltin' frae the Fifan plain?
Though simmer's gane, and we nae langer view
The blades o' clover wat wi' pearls o' dew;
Cauld winter's bleakest blasts we'll eithly cower,
Our elden's driven, and our hairst is owre;
Our rucks fu' thick are stackit i' the yard;
For the Yule feast a sautit mart's prepared;
The ingle-nook supplies the simmer fields,
And aft as mony gleefu' moments yields.
Swith, man! fling a' your sleepy springs awa,
And on your canty whistle gies a blaw.
Blytheness, I trow, maun lighten ilka ee;
And ilka canty callant sing like me.

GEORDIE.

Na, na! a canty spring wad now impart
Just threefauld sorrow to my heavy heart.
Though to the weet my ripen'd aits had fa'n,
Or shake-winds owre my rigs wi' pith had blawn;
To this I could hae said, "I carena by,"
Nor fund occasion now my cheeks to dry.
Crosses like thae, or lack o' warld's gear,
Are naething, when we tyne a friend that's dear.
Ah! waes me for you, Willie! mony a day
Did I wi' you on yon broom-thackit brae
Hound aff my sheep, and let them careless gang,
To harken to your cheery tale or sang—
Sangs that for aye, on Caledonia's strand,
Shall sit the foremost 'mang her tunefu' band.
I dreamt, yestreen, his deadly wraith I saw
Gang by my een, as white's the driven snaw;
My collie, Ringie, youf'd and youl'd a' night,
Cower'd and crap near me, in an unco fright;
I waken'd fley'd, and shook baith lith and limb,
A cauldness took me, and my sight grew dim;
I kent that it forspak approachin' wae,
When my poor doggie was disturbit sae.
Nae sooner did the day begin to dawn,
Than I beyont the knowe fu' speedy ran,
Where I was keppit wi' the heavy tale
That sets ilk dowie sangster to bewail.

DAVIE.

And wha on Fifan bents can weel refuse
To gie the tear o'-tribute to his Muse?—
Fareweel ilk cheery spring, ilk canty note;
Be daffin and ilk idle play forgot:
Bring, ilka herd, the mournfu', mournfu' boughs,
Rosemary sad, and ever-dreary yews;
Thae let be steepit i' the saut, saut tear,
To weet wi' hallow'd draps his sacred bier,
Whase sangs will aye in Scotland be revered,
While slaw-gaun owsen turn the flowery swaird;
While bonnie lambies lick the dews o' spring;
While gaudsmen whistle, or while birdies sing.

GEORDIE.

'Twasna for weel-timed verse, or sangs alane,
He bure the bell frae ilka shepherd swain;

Nature to him had gien a kindly lore,
Deep a' her mystic ferlies to explore:
For a' her secret workings he could gie
Reasons that wi' her principles agree.
Ye saw yoursel how weel his mailin thrave;
Aye better faugh'd and snodit than the lave:
Lang had the thristles and the dockans been
In use to wag their taps upon the green,
Whare now his bonnie rigs delight the view,
And thrivin' hedges drink the cauler dew.[1]

DAVIE.

They tell me, Geordie! he had sic a gift,
That scarce a starnie blinkit frae the lift,
But he would some auld warld name for't find
As gart him keep it freshly in his mind.
For this, some ca'd him an uncanny wight,
The clash gaed round, "he had the second sight;"
A tale that never fail'd to be the pride
O' grannies spinnin' at the ingle-side.

GEORDIE.

But now he's gane; and fame, that, when alive,
Seenil lets ony o' her votaries thrive,
Will frae his shinin' name a' motes withdraw,
And on her loudest trump his praises blaw.
Lang may his sacred banes untroubled rest!
Lang may his truff in gowans gay be drest!
Scholars, and bard unheard o' yet shall come
And stamp memorials on his grassy tomb,
Which in yon ancient kirkyard shall remain,
Famed as the urn that hauds the Mantuan swain.

ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF MR DAVID GREGORY, LATE PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS.

Now mourn, ye college masters a'!
And frae your een a tear let fa';
Famed Gregory death has taen awa,
Without remeid;
The skaith ye've met wi's nae that sma',
Sin' Gregory's dead.

The students, too, will miss him sair;
To school them weel his eident care;
Now they may mourn for ever mair;
They hae great need;
They'll hip the maist feck o' their lear,
Sin' Gregory's dead.

He could, by Euclid, prove lang syne,
A gangin' point composed a line.
By numbers, too, he could divine,
When he did read,
That three times three just made up nine:
But now he's dead.

In algebra weel skill'd he was,
And kent fu' weel proportion's laws:
He could mak clear baith B's and A's
Wi' his lang head;
Rin owre surd roots, but cracks or flaws:
But now he's dead.

Weel versed was he in architecture,
And kent the nature o' the sector;
Upon baith globes he weel could lecture,
And gar's tak heed;
O' geometry he was the Hector:
But now he's dead.

Sae weel's he'd fley the students a',
When they were skelpin' at the ba';
They took leg-bail, and ran awa'
Wi' pith and speed:
We winna get a sport sae braw,
Sin' Gregory's dead.

Great 'casion hae we a' to weep,
And cleed our skins in mournin' deep,
For Gregory death will fairly keep,
To tak his nap:
He'll till the resurrection sleep,
As sound's a tap.

AN ECLOGUE.

WILLIE AND SANDIE.

'Twas e'enin' when the spreckled gowdspink sang;
When new-fa'en dew in blobs o' crystal hang;
Then Will and Sandie thought they'd wrought eneugh,
And lows'd their sair-toil'd owsen frae the pleugh.
Before they ca'd their beasts unto the town,
The lads, to draw their breath, e'en sat them down:
To the stiff sturdy aik they lean their backs,
While honest Sandie thus begins the cracks.

SANDIE.

Ance I could hear the lavrock's shrill-tuned throat,
And listen to the clatterin' gowdspink's note:
Ance I could whistle cantily as they,
To owsen, as they till'd my ruggit clay:
But now, I would as lieve maist lend my lugs
To tuneless puddocks croakin' i' the bogs.
I sigh at hame; a-field I'm dowie too;
To sowf a tune I'll never crook my mou.

WILLIE.

Foul fa' me! if your bridal hadna been
Nae langer bygane than sin' Halloween,
I could hae tell't you, but a warlock's art,
That some daft lightlyin quean had stown your heart:
Our beasties here will tak their e'enin' pluck;
And now, sin' Jock's gane hame the byres to muck,
Fain would I houp my friend will be inclined
To gie me a' the secrets o' his mind:
Heh, Sandie, lad! what dool's come owre ye now,
That you to whistle ne'er will crook your mou?

SANDIE.

Ah, Willie, Willie! I may date my wae
Frae what betid me on my bridal day;
Sair may I rue the hour in which our hands
Were knit thegither in the haly bands:
Sin' that I thrave sae ill, in troth, I fancy,
Some fiend or fairy, no sae very chancy,
Has driven me, by pawky wiles uncommon,
To wed this flytin' fury o' a woman.

WILLIE.

Ah, Sandie! aften hae I heard you tell,
Amang the lassies a' she bure the bell;
And say, the modest glances o' her een
Far dang the brightest beauties o' the green:
You ca'd her aye sae innocent, sae young,
I thought she kenn'd na how to use her tongue.

SANDIE.

Before I married her, I'll tak my aith,
Her tongue was never louder than her breath;
But now it's turn'd sae souple and sae bauld,
That Job himsel could scarcely thole the scauld.

WILLIE.

Let her yelp on; be you as calm's a mouse,
Nor let your whisht be heard into the house:
Do what she can, or be as loud's she please,
Ne'er mind her flytes, but set your heart at ease:
Sit down and blaw your pipe, nor fash your thumb,
And there's my hand, she'll tire, and soon sing dumb.
Sooner should winter's cauld confine the sea,
And let the sma'est o' our burns rin free;
Sooner at Yule-day shall the birk be drest,
Or birds in sapless busses big their nest;
Before a tonguey woman's noisy plea
Should ever be a cause to daunton me.

[1] Dr Wilkie had a farm near St Andrews, on which he made great improvements.

SANDIE.

Weel could I this abide; but, oh! I fear
I'll soon be twin'd o' a' my warldly gear.
My kirnstaff now stands gizzen'd at the door;
My cheese-rack toom, that ne'er was toom before;
My kye may now rin rowtin' to the hill,
And on the naked yird their milkness spill:
She seenil lays her hand upon a turn;
Neglects the kebbuck, and forgets the kirn.
I vow, my hair-mould milk would poison dogs,
As it stands lapper'd i' the dirty cogs.
Before the seed, I sell'd my ferra cow,
And wi' the profit coft a stane o' woo';
I thought, by priggin', that she might hae spun
A plaidie, light, to screen me frae the sun:
But though the siller's scant, the cleedin' dear,
She hasna ca'd about a wheel the year.
Last ouk but ane I was frae hame a day,
Buying a threave or twa o' beddin' strae:
O' ilka thing the woman had her will;
Had fouth o' meal to bake, and hens to kill:
But hyne awa to Edinbrough scour'd she
To get a makin' o' her fav'rite tea;
And 'cause I leftna her the weary clink,
She pawn'd the very trunchers frae my bink.

WILLIE.

Her tea! ah, wae betide sic costly gear,
Or them that ever wad the price o't spier!
Sin' my auld gutcher first the warld knew,
Fouk hadna fund the Indies whare it grew.
I mind mysel, it's no sae lang sin' syne,
When auntie Marion did her stamack tyne,
That Davs, our gard'ner, cam frae Applebog,
And gae her tea to tak by way o' drog.

SANDIE.

When ilka herd for cauld his fingers rubs,
And cakes o' ice are seen upon the dubs;
At mornin', when frae pleugh or fauld I come,
I'll see a braw reek rising frae my lum,
And aiblins think to get a rantin' bleeze,
To fley the frost awa, and toast my taes;
But when I shoot my nose in, ten to ane
If I weelfar'dly see my ain hearthstane.
She round the ingle wi' her gimmers sits,
Crammin' their gebbies wi' her nicest bits;
While the guidman, out-by, maun fill his crap
Frae the milk coggie or the parritch cap.

WILLIE.

Sandie! if this were ony common plea,
I should the lealest o' my counsel gie;
But mak or meddle betwixt man and wife
Is what I never did in a' my life.
It's wearin' on now to the tail o' May,
And just between the bear-seed and the hay;
As lang's an orra mornin' can be spared,
Stap your ways east the haugh, and tell the laird:
For he's a man weel versed in a' the laws;
Kens baith their outs and ins, their cracks and flaws;
And aye right gleg, when things are out o' joint,
At settlin' o' a nice or kittle point.
But yonder's Jock; he'll ca' your owsen hame,
And tak thir tidings to your thrawart dame,
That ye're awa ae peacefu' meal to prie,
And tak your supper, kail, or sow'ns, wi' me.

THE GHAISTS,

A KIRK-YARD ECLOGUE.

Did you not say, in good Anne's day,
And vow, and did protest, sir,
That when Hanover should come over,
We surely should be blest, sir?—
An auld sang made new again.

Where the braid planes in dowie murmurs wave
Their ancient taps out-owre the cauld-clad grave,
Where Geordie Girdwood, mony a lang spun day,
Houkit for gentles' banes the humblest clay,
Twa sheeted ghaists,[1] sae grisly and sae wan,
'Mang lanely tombs their douff discourse began.

WATSON.

Cauld blaws the nippin' north wi' angry sough,
And showers his hailstanes frae the castle cleugh
Owre the Greyfriars,[2] where, at mirkest hour,
Bogles and spectres wont to tak their tour,
Harlin' the pows and shanks to hidden cairns,
Amang the hemlocks wild and sun-burnt ferns;
But nane the night, save you and I, hae come
Frae the drear mansions o' the midnight tomb.
Now when the dawnin's near, when cock maun craw,
And wi' his angry bougil gar's withdraw,
Ayont the kirk we'll stap, and there tak bield,
While the black hours our nightly freedom yield.

HERIOT.

I'm weel content: but binna cassen down,
Nor trow the cock will ca' ye hame owre soon;
For, though the eastern lift betokens day,
Changing her rokelay black for mantle grey,
Nae weirlike bird our knell of parting rings,
Nor sheds the cauler moisture frae his wings.
Nature has changed her course; the birds o' day
Dozin' in silence on the bending spray,
While owlets round the craigs at noontide flee,
And bluidy hawks sit singin' on the tree.
Ah, Caledon! the land I ance held dear,
Sair mane mak I for thy destruction near;
And thou, Edina! ance my dear abode,
When royal Jamie sway'd the sovereign rod.
In thae blest days weel did I think bestow'd
To blaw thy poortith by wi' heaps o' gowd;
To mak thee sonsy seem wi' mony a gift,
And gar thy stately turrets speel the lift.
In vain did Danish Jones, wi' gimgrack pains,
In Gothic sculpture fret the pliant stanes;[3]
In vain did he affix my statue here,
Brawly to busk wi' flowers ilk coming year—
My towers are sunk; my lands are barren now;
My fame, my honour, like my flowers maun dow.

WATSON.

Sure, Major Weir, or some sic warlock wight,
Has flung beguilin' glamour owre your sight;
Or else some kittle cantrip thrown, I ween,
Has bound in mirlygoes my ain twa een:
If ever aught frae sense could be believed
(And seenil hae my senses been deceived),
This moment owre the tap o' Adam's tomb,[4]
Fu' easy can I see your chiefest dome.
Nae corbie fleein' there, nor croupin craws,
Seem to forspeak the ruin o' thy ha's;
But a' your towers in wonted order stand,
Steeve as the rocks that hem our native land.

HERIOT.

Thinkna I vent my well-a-day in vain;
Kenn'd ye the cause, ye sure wad join my mane.
Black be the day, that ere to England's ground
Scotland was eikit by the Union's bond!
For mony a menzie of destructive ills
The country now maun brook frae mortmain bills,
That void our test'ments, and can freely gie
Sic will and scoup to the ordain'd trustee,
That he may tir our stateliest riggings bare,
Nor acres, houses, wood, nor fishings spare,

[1] [The interlocutors are George Heriot and George Watson, the founders of two well-known institutions in Edinburgh for the support and education of the sons of decayed citizens. These institutions, or hospitals, are closely adjacent to the churchyard.]

[2] [The Greyfriars churchyard, in Edinburgh.]

[3] [Heriot's Hospital is said to have been designed by Inigo Jones.]

[4] [A conspicuous mausoleum belonging to the family of William Adam of Maryborough, architect, father of the celebrated Robert and James Adam, builders of the Adelphi.]

Till he can lend the stoiterin' state a lift,
Wi' gowd in goupins, as a grassum gift;
In lieu o' whilk, we maun be weel content
To tyne the capital for *three per cent*—
A doughty sum, indeed, when now-a-days
They raise provisions as the stents they raise;
Yoke hard the poor, and let the rich chiels be
Pamper'd at ease by ithers' industry.
Hale interest for my fund can scantly now
Cleed a' my callants' backs, and stap their mou.
How maun their wames wi' sairest hunger slack;
Their duds in targets flaff upon their back;
When they are doom'd to keep a lastin' lent,
Starvin' for England's weel at *three per cent!*

WATSON.

Auld Reekie, then, may bless the gowden times,
When honesty and poortith baith are crimes.
She little kenn'd, when you and I endow'd
Our hospitals for back-gaun burghers' guid,
That e'er our siller or our lands should bring
A guid bien livin' to a back-gaun king;
Wha, thanks to ministry! is grown sae wise,
He downa chew the bitter cud o' vice:
For if frae Castlehill to Netherbow,
Wad honest houses bawdyhouses grow,
The crown wad never speir the price o' sin,
Nor hinder younkers to the deil to rin;
But if some mortal grein for pious fame,
And leave the poor man's prayer to sain his name,
His gear maun a' be scatter'd by the claws
O' ruthless, ravenous, and harpy laws.
Yet should I think, although the bill tak place,
The council winna lack sae meikle grace
As let our heritage at wanworth gang,
Or the succeeding generations wrang
O' braw bien maintenance, and wealth o' lear,
Whilk else had drappit to their children's skair;
For mony a deep, and mony a rare engine
Hae sprung frae Heriot's Wark, and sprung frae mine.

HERIOT.

I find, my friend, that ye but little ken,
There's e'en now on the earth a set o' men,
Wha, if they get their private pouches lined,
Giena a windle-strae for a' mankind.
They'll sell their country, flae their conscience bare,
To gaur the weigh-bauk turn a single hair.
The government need only bait the line
Wi' the prevailin' flie—the gowden coin!
Then our executors and wise trustees
Will sell them fishes in forbidden seas:
Upon their dwinin' country girn in sport;
Laugh in their sleeve, and get a place at court.

WATSON.

Ere that day come, I'll 'mang our spirits pick
Some ghaist that trokes and conjures wi' auld Nick,
To gar the wind wi' rougher rumbles blaw,
And weightier thuds than ever mortal saw;
Fireflaught and hail, wi' tenfauld fury's fires,
Shall lay yird-laigh Edina's airy spires:
Tweed shall rin rowtin' down his banks out-owre,
Till Scotland's out o' reach o' England's power,
Upon the briny Borean jaws to float,
And mourn in dowie soughs her dowie lot.

HERIOT.

Yonder's the tomb o' wise Mackenzie[1] famed,
Whase laws rebellious bigotry reclaim'd;
Free'd the hale land o' covenantin' fools,
Wha erst hae fash'd us wi' unnumber'd dools.
Till night we'll tak the swaird aboon our pows,
And then, whan she her ebon chariot rows,
We'll travel to the vau't wi' stealin' stap,
And wauk Mackenzie frae his quiet nap;
Tell him our ails, that he, wi' wonted skill,
May fleg the schemers o' the mortmain bill.

[1] [Another conspicuous mausoleum in the Greyfriars churchyard—the burial-place of Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, king's advocate or public prosecutor in the persecuting reigns of Charles II. and James II.]

EPISTLE TO MR ROBERT FERGUSSON.

Is Allan risen frae the dead,
Wha aft has tuned the aiten reed,
And by the Muses was decreed
To grace the thistle?
Na—Fergusson's come in his stead,
To blaw the whistle.

In troth, my callant! I'm sae fain
To read your sonsy, canty strain;
You write sic easy style, and plain,
And words sae bonnie;
Nae southron loun dare you disdain,
Or cry, "Fye on ye!"

Whae'er has at Auld Reekie been,
And king's birth-days' exploits hae seen,
Maun own that ye hae gien a keen
And true description;
Nor say, ye've at Parnassus been
To form a fiction.

Hale be your heart, ye canty chield!
May ye ne'er want a guid warm bield,
And sic guid cakes as Scotland yield,
And ilka dainty
That grows or feeds upon her field,
And whisky plenty!

But ye, perhaps, thirst mair for fame
Than a' the guid things I can name;
And then, ye will be fair to blame
My guid intention:
For that ye needna gae frae hame,
You've sic pretension.

Sae saft and sweet your verses jingle,
And your auld words sae meetly mingle,
'Twill gar baith married fouk and single
To roose your lays:
When we forgather round the ingle,
We'll chaunt your praise.

When I again Auld Reekie see,
And can forgather, lad, wi' thee,
Then we, wi' meikle mirth and glee,
Shall tak a gill,
And o' your cauler oysters we
Shall eat our fill.

If sic a thing should you betide,
To Berwick town to tak a ride,
I'se tak ye up Tweed's bonnie side
Before ye settle,
And shaw you there the fisher's pride,
A sa'mon kettle.

There lads and lasses do conveen,
To feast and dance upon the green;
And there sic bravery may be seen
As will confound ye,
And gar you glower out baith your een
At a' around ye.

To see sae mony bosoms bare,
And sic huge puddings i' their hair,
And some o' them wi' naething mair
Upon their tete;
Yea, some wi' mutches that might scare
Craws frae their meat.

I ne'er appeared before in print,
But, for your sake, wad fain be in't,
E'en that I might my wishes hint
That you'd write mair;
For sure your head-piece is a mint
Where wit's no rare.

Sonse fa' me, gif I hadna lure
I could command ilk muse as sure,
Than hae a chariot at the door
To wait upon me;
Though, poet-like, I'm but a poor
Mid-Lothian Johnny.

Berwick, August 31, 1773. J. S.

ANSWER TO MR J. S.'S EPISTLE.

I trow, my mettled Lothian laddie!
Auld-farran birkie I maun ca' thee;
For when in guid black print I saw thee,
Wi' souple gab
I skirled fu' loud, "Oh, wae befa' thee!
But thou'rt a daub."

Awa, ye wily fleetchin' fallow!
The rose shall grow like gowan yellow,
Before I turn sae toom and shallow,
And void o' fushion,
As a' your butter'd words to swallow
In vain delusion.

Ye mak my muse a dautit pet;
But gin she could like Allan's met,
Or couthy cracks and hamely get
Upon her carritch,
Eithly wad I be in your debt
A pint o' parritch.

At times, when she may lowse her pack,
I'll grant that she can find a knack
To gar auld-warld wordies clack
In hamespun rhyme,
While ilk ane at his billy's back
Keeps guid Scots time.

But she maun e'en be glad to jook,
And play teet-bo frae nook to nook,
Or blush, as gin she had the youk
Upon her skin,
When Ramsay or when Pennycuik
Their lilts begin.

At mornin' ear', or late at e'enin',
Gin ye sud hap to come and see ane,
Nor niggard wife, nor greetin' wee ane,
Within my cloyster,
Can challenge you and me frae priein'
A cauler oyster.

Hech, lad! it would be news indeed
Were I to ride to bonnie Tweed,
Wha ne'er laid gammon owre a steed
Beyont Lysterrick;[1]
And auld shanks-naig would tire, I dread,
To pace to Berwick.

You crack weel o' your lasses there:
Their glancin' een, and brisket bare;
But, though this town be smeekit sair,
I'll wad a farden,
Than ours there's nane mair fat and fair,
Cravin' your pardon.

Gin heaven should gie the earth a drink,
And afterhend a sunny blink;
Gin ye were here, I'm sure you'd think
It worth your notice,
To see them dubs and gutters jink
Wi' kiltit coaties.

And frae ilk corner o' the nation
We've lasses eke o' recreation,
Wha at close-mous tak up their station
By ten o'clock:—
The Lord deliver frae temptation
A' honest fouk!

Thir queans are aye upon the catch
For pursie, pocket-book, or watch,
And can sae glib their leesins hatch,
That you'll agree,
Ye canna eithly meet their match
'Tween you and me.

For this guid sample o' your skill
I'm restin' you a pint o' yill,
By and attour a Highland gill
O' *aqua vitæ;*
The which to come and sock at will
I here invite ye.

[1] [Restalrig, a village near Edinburgh.]

Though jillet fortune scowl and quarrel,
And keep me frae a bien beef barrel,
As lang's I've twopence i' the warl'
I'll aye be vokie
To part a fadge or girdle farl
Wi' Lothian Jockie.

Fareweel, my cock! lang may you thrive,
Weel happit in a cozy hive;
And that your saul may never dive
To Acheron,
I'll wish, as lang's I can subscrive
ROB. FERGUSSON.

TO MY AULD BREEKS.

Now gae your wa's—though ance as guid
As ever happit flesh and bluid,
Yet part we maun.—The case sae hard is
Amang the writers and the bardies,
That lang they'll bruik the auld, I trow,
Or neibours cry, "Weel bruik the new!"
Still makin' tight, wi' tither steek,
The tither hole, the tither eik,
To bang the bir o' winter's anger,
And haud the hurdies out o' langer.
Siclike some weary wight will fill
His kyte wi' drogs frae doctor's bill,
Thinkin' to tack the tither year
To life, and look baith hale and fier,
Till at the lang-run death dirks in,
To birze his saul ayont his skin.
You needna wag your duds o' clouts,
Nor fa' into your dorty pouts,
To think that erst you've hain'd my tail
Frae wind and weet, frae snaw and hail,
And for reward, when bald and hummil,
Frae garret high to dree a tummil.
For you I cared, as lang's ye dow'd
Be lined wi' siller or wi' gowd:
Now to befriend it wad be folly,
Your raggit hide and pouches holey;
For wha but kens a poet's placks
Get mony weary flaws and cracks,
And canna thole to hae them tint,
As he sae seenil sees the mint?
Yet round the warld keek, and see
That ithers fare as ill as thee;
For weel we loe the chield we think
Can get us tick, or gie us drink,
Till o' his purse we've seen the bottom,
Then we despise, and hae forgot him.
Yet gratefu' hearts, to mak amends,
Will aye be sorry for their friends,
And I for thee;—as mony a time
Wi' you I've speel'd the braes o' rhyme,
Where, for the time, the muse ne'er cares
For siller, or sic guilefu' wares,
Wi' whilk we drumly grow, and crabbit,
Dour, capernoited, thrawin'-gabbit;
And brither, sister, friend, and fae,
Without remeid of kindred, slay.
You've seen me round the bickers reel
Wi' heart as hale as temper'd steel,
And face sae open, free, and blythe,
Nor thought that sorrow there could kythe;
But the niest moment this was lost,
Like gowan in December's frost.
Could prick-the-louse but be sae handy
As mak the breeks and claes to stand aye,
Through thick and thin wi' you I'd dash on,
Nor mind the folly o' the fashion:
But, hech! the times' *vicissitudo*
Gars ither breeks decay, as you do.
The macaronies, braw and windy,
Maun fail—*Sic transit gloria mundi!*
Now, speed you to some madam's chaumer
That butt and ben rings dule and clamour

Ask her, in kindness, if she seeks
In hidlin ways to wear the breeks.
Safe you may dwell, though mould and mooty,
Beneath the veil o' under-coatie:
For this, mair fau'ts nor yours can screen
Frae lover's quickest sense, his een.
Or if some bard, in lucky times,
Should profit meikle by his rhymes,
And pace awa, wi' smirky face,
In siller or in gowden lace,
Glower in his face, like spectre gaunt,
Remind him o' his former want,
To cow his daffin' and his pleasure,
And gar him live within the measure.
So Philip, it is said, who would ring
Ower Macedon a just and guid king,
Fearing that power might plume his feather,
And bid him stretch beyont the tether,
Ilk morning to his lug would ca'
A tiny servant o' his ha',
To tell him to improve his span,
For Philip was, like him, a man.

AULD REEKIE.[1]

[This poem is a curious memorial of Edinburgh in its old state, when as yet it mainly consisted of one or two densely built streets, and exhibited many of the moral and social features of a small country town. The coarse bacchanalianism—the filthiness—the gossipry—the cadies, macaronies, street-haunters of all kinds—are all here faithfully described.]

Auld Reekie! wale o' ilka town
That Scotland kens beneath the moon;
Where coothy chields at e'enin' meet,
Their bizzin craigs and mous to weet;
And blythely gar auld care gae by
Wi' blinkin' and wi' bleerin' eye.
Ower lang frae thee the muse has been
Sae frisky on the simmer's green,
When flowers and gowans wont to glent
In bonnie blinks upon the bent;
But now the leaves o' yellow dye,
Peel'd frae the branches, quickly fly;
And now frae nouther bush nor brier
The spreckled mavis greets your ear;
Nor bonnie blackbird skims and roves
To seek his love in yonder groves.
Then, Reekie, welcome! Thou canst charm,
Unfleggit by the year's alarm.
Not Boreas, that sae snelly blows,
Dare here pop in his angry nose;
Thanks to our dads, whase biggin stands
A shelter to surrounding lands!
Now morn, wi' bonnie purple smiles
Kisses the air-cock o' Saunt Giles;
Rakin' their een, the servant lasses
Early begin their lies and clashes.
Ilk tells her friend o' saddest distress
That still she bruiks frae scoulin' mistress;
And wi' her joe, in turnpike stair,
She'd rather snuff the stinkin' air,
As be subjected to her tongue,
When justly censured i' the wrong.
On stair, wi' tub or pat in hand,
The barefoot housemaids loe to stand,
That antrin fouk may ken how snell
Auld Reekie will at mornin' smell:
Then, wi' an inundation big as
The burn that 'neath the Nor' Loch brig is,
They kindly shower Edina's roses,
To quicken and regale our noses.
Now some for this, wi' satire's leesh,
Hae gien auld Edinbrough a creesh:
But without sourin' nought is sweet;
The mornin' smells that hail our street
Prepare and gently lead the way
To simmer canty, braw, and gay.
Edina's sons mair eithly share
Her spices and her dainties rare,
Than he that's never yet been call'd
Aff frae his plaidie or his fauld.
Now stairhead critics, senseless fools!
Censure their aim, and pride their rules,
In Luckenbooths, wi' glowrin' eye,
Their neibour's sma'est fau'ts descry.
If ony loun should dander there,
O' awkward gait and foreign air,
They trace his steps, till they can tell
His pedigree as weel's himsel.
When Phœbus blinks wi' warmer ray,
And schools at noon-day get the play,
Then bus'ness, weighty bus'ness, comes;
The trader glowers—he doubts, he hums.
The lawyers eke to Cross repair,
Their wigs to shaw, and toss an air;
While busy agent closely plies,
And a' his kittle cases tries.
Now night, that's cunzied chief for fun,
Is wi' her usual rites begun;
Through ilka gate the torches blaze,
And globes send out their blinkin' rays.
The usefu' cadie plies in street,
To bide the profits o' his feet;
For, by thir lads Auld Reekie's fouk
Ken but a sample o' the stock
O' thieves, that nightly wad oppress,
And mak baith goods and gear the less.
Near him the lazy chairman stands,
And wotsna how to turn his hands,
Till some daft birkie, rantin' fou,
Has matters somewhere else to do;—
The chairman willing gies his light
To deeds o' darkness and o' night.
It's never saxpence for a lift
That gars thir lads wi' founess rift;
For they wi' better gear are paid,
And whores and culls support their trade.
Near some lamp-post, wi' dowie face,
Wi' heavy een and sour grimace,
Stands she, that beauty lang had kenn'd—
Whoredom her trade, and vice her end.
But see where now she wins her bread
By that which nature ne'er decreed,
And vicious ditties sings to please
Fell dissipation's votaries.
Whene'er we reputation lose,
Fair chastity's transparent gloss!
Redemption, seenil kens the name—
But a's black misery and shame.
Frae joyous tavern, reelin' drunk,
Wi' fiery phiz and een half sunk,
Behold the bruiser, fae to a'
That in the reek o' gardies fa'!
Close by his side, a feckless race
O' macaronies show their face,
And think they're free frae skaith or harm,
While pith befriends their leader's arm.
Yet fearfu' aften o' their maught,
They quit the glory o' the faught
To this same warrior, wha led
Thae heroes to bright honour's bed;
And aft the hack o' honour shines
In bruiser's face wi' broken lines.
O' them sad tales he tells anon,
When ramble and when fighting's done;
And, like Hectorian, ne'er impairs
The brag and glory o' his sairs.
When feet in dirty gutters plash,
And fouk to wale their fitstaps fash—
At night, the macaroni drunk,
In pools and gutters afttimes sunk:
Hech! what a fright he now appears,
When he his corpse dejected rears!

[1] [A familiar appellation for Edinburgh, originating no doubt with reference to the dense coal smoke which constantly involves the city.]

Look at that head, and think if there
The pomet slaister'd up his hair!
The cheeks observe;—where now could shine
The scancin' glories o' carmine?
Ah, legs! in vain the silk-worm there
Display'd to view her eident care;
For stink instead of perfumes grow,
And clarty odours fragrant flow.
Now, some to porter, some to punch,
Some to their wife, and some their wench,
Retire; while noisy ten hours' drum
Gars a' your trades gae danderin' hame.
Now, mony a club, jocose and free,
Gie a' to merriment and glee;
Wi' sang and glass they fley the power
O' care, that wad harass the hour;
For wine and Bacchus still bear down
Our thrawart fortune's wildest frown:
It maks you stark, and bauld, and brave,
Even when descending to the grave.
Now some, in Pandemonium's shade,[1]
Resume the gormandising trade;
Where eager looks, and glancin' een,
Forspeak a heart and stamack keen.
Gang on, my lads! it's lang sinsyne
We kenn'd auld Epicurus' line;
Save you, the board wad cease to rise,
Bedight wi' daintiths to the skies;
And salamanders cease to swill
The comforts o' a burning gill.
But chief, oh Cape![1] we crave thy aid,
To get our cares and poortith laid.
Sincerity and genius true,
O' knights have ever been the due.
Mirth, music, porter deepest dyed,
Are never here to worth denied;
And health, o' happiness the queen,
Blinks bonnie wi' her smile serene.
Though joy maist part Auld Reekie owns
Eftsoons she kens sad sorrow's frowns.
What group is yon sae dismal, grim,
Wi' horrid aspect, cleedin' dim?
Says Death, "They're mine—a dowie crew—
To me they'll quickly pay their last adieu."
How come mankind, when lacking woe,
In saulie's face their hearts to show;[2]
As if they were a clock to tell
That grief in them had rung her bell?
Then, what is man?—why a' this fraise?
Life's spunk decay'd, nae mair can blaze.
Let sober grief alane declare
Our fond anxiety and care;
Nor let the undertakers be
The only waefu' friends we see.
Come on, my Muse! and then rehearse
The gloomiest theme in a' your verse.
In mornings, when ane keeks about,
Fu' blythe and free frae ail, nae doubt,
He lippens no to be misled
Amang the regions o' the dead;
But, straight, a painted corpse he sees,
Lang streekit 'neath its canopies.
Soon, soon will this his mirth control,
And send damnation to his soul:
Or when the dead deal (awfu' shape!)
Maks frighted mankind girn and gape,
Reflection then his reason sours—
For the neist dead-deal may be ours.
When Sibyl led the Trojan down
To haggard Pluto's dreary town,
Shapes waur nor thae, I freely ween,
Could never meet the soger's een.
If kail sae green, or herbs, delight,
Edina's street attracts the sight:[3]
Not Covent-Garden, clad sae braw,
Mair fouth o' herbs can eithly shaw;
For mony a yard is here sair sought,
That kail and cabbage may be bought,
And healthfu' salad to regale,
When pamper'd wi' a heavy meal.
Glower up the street in simmer morn,
The birks sae green, and sweet-brier thorn.
Wi' spraingit flowers that scent the gale,
Ca' far awa the mornin' smell,
Wi' which our ladies' flower-pat's fill'd,
And every noxious vapour kill'd.
Oh, Nature! canty, blythe, and free,
Where is there keeking-glass like thee?
Is there on earth that can compare
Wi' Mary's shape and Mary's air,
Save the empurpled speck, that grows
In the saft fauld o' yonder rose?
How bonnie seems the virgin breast,
When by the lilies here caresst,
And leaves the mind in doubt to tell,
Which maist in sweets and hue excel.
Gillespie's snuff[1] should prime the nose
O' her that to the market goes,
If she wad like to shun the smells
That float around frae market cells;
Where wames o' painches' sav'ry scent
To nostrils gie great discontent.
Now, wha in Albion could expect
O' cleanliness sic great neglect?
Nae Hottentot, that daily lairs
'Mang tripe, and ither clarty wares,
Hath ever yet conceived or seen,
Beyond the Line, sic scenes unclean.
On Sunday, here, an alter'd scene
O' men and manners meets our een.
Ane wad maist trow, some people chose
To change their faces wi' their clo'es,
And fain wad gar ilk neibour think
They thirst for guidness as for drink;
But there's an unco dearth o' grace,
That has nae mansion but the face,
And never can obtain a part
In benmost corner o' the heart.
Why should religion mak us sad,
If good frae virtue's to be had?
Na: rather gleefu' turn your face,
Forsake hypocrisy, grimace;
And never hae it understood
You fleg mankind frae being good.
In afternoon, a' brawly buskit,
The joes and lasses loe to frisk it.
Some tak a great delight to place
The modest bon-grace owre the face;
Though you may see, if so inclined,
The turning o' the leg behind.
Now, Comely-Garden and the Park
Refresh them, after forenoon's wark:
Newhaven, Leith, or Canonmills,
Supply them in their Sunday's gills;
Where writers aften spend their pence,
To stock their heads wi' drink and sense.
While danderin' cits delight to stray
To Castlehill or public way,
Where they nae other purpose mean,
Than that fool cause o' being seen,
Let me to Arthur's Seat pursue,
Where bonnie pastures meet the view,
And mony a wild-lorn scene accrues,
Befitting Willie Shakspeare's muse.
If Fancy there would join the thrang,
The desert rocks and hills amang,
To echoes we should lilt and play,
And gie to mirth the live-lang day.
Or should some canker'd biting shower
The day and a' her sweets deflower,

[1] Pandemonium and the Cape were two social clubs.

[2] [The hired attendants at funerals are called saulies in Scotland.]

[3] [The High Street between the Tron Church and St Giles's was then a vegetable market.]

[1] [Two brothers Gillespie, who realised a large fortune as tobacconists in Edinburgh.]

To Holyrood-house let me stray,
And gie to musing a' the day;
Lamenting what auld Scotland knew,
Bien days for ever frae her view.
O Hamilton, for shame! the Muse
Would pay to thee her couthy vows,
Gin ye wad tent the humble strain,
And gie's our dignity again!
For, oh, wae's me! the thistle springs
In domicil o' ancient kings,
Without a patriot to regret
Our palace and our ancient state.
Blest place! where debtors daily run,
To rid themsels frae jail and dun.[1]
Here, though sequester'd frae the din
That rings Auld Reekie's wa's within;
Yet they may tread the sunny braes,
And bruik Apollo's cheery rays:
Glower frae St Anthon's grassy height,
Ower vales in simmer claes bedight;
Nor ever hing their head, I ween,
Wi' jealous fear o' being seen.
May I, whenever duns come nigh,
And shake my garret wi' their cry,
Scour here wi' haste, protection get,
To screen mysel frae them and debt;
To breathe the bliss o' open sky,
And Simon Fraser's bolts defy.[2]
Now gin a loun should hae his claes
In threadbare autumn o' their days,
St Mary, broker's guardian saunt,
Will satisfy ilk ail and want;[3]
For mony a hungry writer there
Dives down at night, wi' cleedin' bare,
And quickly rises to the view
A gentleman, perfite and new.
Ye rich fouk! lookna wi' disdain
Upon this ancient brokage lane,
For naked poets are supplied
Wi' what you to their wants denied.
Peace to thy shade, thou wale o' men,
Drummond![4] relief to poortith's pain:
To thee the greatest bliss we owe,
And tribute's tear shall gratefu' flow:
The sick are cured, the hungry fed,
And dreams o' comfort tend their bed.
As lang as Forth weets Lothian's shore,
As lang's on Fife her billows roar,
Sae lang shall ilk whase country's dear,
To thy remembrance gie a tear.
By thee, Auld Reekie thrave and grew
Delightfu' to her childer's view;
Nae mair shall Glasgow striplings threap
Their city's beauty and its shape,
While our new city spreads around
Her bonnie wings on fairy ground.
But provosts now, that ne'er afford
The sma'est dignity to lord,
Ne'er care though every scheme gae wild
That Drummond's sacred hand has cull'd.
The spacious brig[5] neglected lies,
Though plagued wi' pamphlets, dunn'd wi' cries;
They heed not, though destruction come
To gulp us in her gaunting womb.
Oh, shame! that safety canna claim
Protection from a provost's name;
But hidden danger lies behind,
To torture and to fleg the mind.

[1] [The precincts of Holyrood Palace are a sanctuary for debtors.]

[2] The keeper of the Tolbooth.

[3] [St Mary's Wynd is a mean street in Edinburgh, exclusively occupied by dealers in old clothes.]

[4] [George Drummond, a benevolent chief magistrate of Edinburgh, who was chiefly instrumental in the establishment of an infirmary in his native city, and in the extension of the city over the grounds to the north.]

[5] In allusion to the state of the North Bridge after its fall.

I may as weel bid Arthur's Seat
To Berwick Law mak gleg retreat,
As think that either will or art
Shall get the gate to win her heart:
For politics are a' their mark,
Bribes latent, and corruption dark.
If they can eithly turn the pence,
Wi' city's good they will dispense,
Nor care though a' her sons were lair'd
Ten fathom i' the auld kirkyard.
To sing yet meikle does remain,
Undecent for a modest strain;
And since the poet's daily bread is
The favour o' the Muse or ladies,
He downa like to gie offence
To delicacy's tender sense;
Therefore the stews remain unsung,
And bawds in silence drap their tongue.
Reekie, fareweel! I ne'er could part
Wi' thee, but wi' a dowie heart:
Aft frae the Fifan coast I've seen
Thee towerin' on thy summit green;
So glower the saints when first is given
A favourite keek o' glore and heaven.
On earth nae mair they bend their een,
But quick assume angelic mien;
So I on Fife wad glower no more,
But gallop to Edina's shore.

HAME CONTENT,

A SATIRE.

To all whom it may concern.

Some fouk, like bees, fu' glegly rin
To bykes bang'd fu' o' strife and din,
And thieve and huddle, crum by crum,
Till they hae scraped the dautit plum;
Then craw fell crousely o' their wark,
Tell owre their turners, mark by mark,
Yet darena think to lowse the pose,
To aid their neighbours' ails and woes.
If gowd can fetter thus the heart,
And gar us act sae base a part,
Shall man, a niggard, near-gaun elf!
Rin to the tether's end for pelf;
Learn ilka cunzied scoundrel's trick;
When a's done, sell his saul to Nick?
I trow they've coft the purchase dear,
That gang sic lengths for warldly gear.
Now, when the dog-day heats begin
To birsle and to peel the skin,
May I lie streekit at my ease
Beneath the cauler shady trees
(Far frae the din o' borrows town),
Where water plays the haughs bedown;
To jouk the simmer's rigour there,
And breathe a while the cauler air,
'Mang herds and honest cottar fouk,
That till the farm and feed the flock;
Careless o' mair, wha never fash
To lade their kist wi' useless cash,
But thank the gods for what they've sent
O' health eneugh, and blythe content,
And pith that helps them to stravaig
Ower ilka cleugh and ilka craig;
Unkenn'd to a' the weary granes
That aft arise frae gentler banes,
On easy chair that pamper'd lie,
Wi' baneful viands gustit high,
And turn and fauld their weary clay,
To rax and gaunt the live-lang day.
Ye sages tell, was man e'er made
To dree this hatefu' sluggard trade?
Steekit frae nature's beauties a',
That daily on his presence ca';
At hame to girn, and whinge, and pine
For fav'rite dishes, fav'rite wine:

Come, then, shake aff thir sluggish ties,
And wi' the bird o' dawning rise!
On ilka bank the clouds hae spread
Wi' blobs o' dew a pearly bed;
Frae faulds nae mair the owsen rout,
But to the fatt'ning clover lout,
Whare they may feed at heart's content,
Unyokit frae their winter's stent.
Unyoke thee, man, and binna swear
To ding a hole in ill-hain'd gear!
Oh think that eild, wi' wily fit,
Is wearing nearer bit by bit!
Gin yence he claws you wi' his paw,
What's siller for? Fient hait ava;
But gowden playfair, that may please
The second sharger till he dies.
Some daft chiel reads, and taks advice;
The chaise is yokit in a trice;
Awa drives he like huntit deil,
And scarce tholes time to cool his wheel,
Till he's, Lord kens how far awa'!
At Italy or well o' Spa,
Or to Montpelier's safter air;
For far-aff fowls hae feathers fair.
There rest him weel! for eith can we
Spare mony glaikit gowks like he;
They'll tell whare Tiber's waters rise;
What sea receives the drumly prize,
That never wi' their feet hae met
The marches o' their ain estate.
The Arno and the Tiber lang
Hae run fell clear in Roman sang;
But, save the reverence o' schools,
They're baith but lifeless, dowie pools.
Dought they compare wi' bonnie Tweed,
As clear as ony lammer-bead?
Or are their shores mair sweet and gay
Than Fortha's haughs or banks o' Tay?
Tho' there the herds can jink the showers
'Mang thriving vines and myrtle bowers,
And blaw the reed to kittle strains,
While echo's tongue commends their pains;
Like ours, they canna warm the heart
Wi' simple saft bewitching art.
On Leader haughs and Yarrow braes,
Arcadian herds wad tyne their lays,
To hear the mair melodious sounds
That live on our poetic grounds.
Come, Fancy! come, and let us tread
The simmer's flow'ry velvet bed,
And a' your springs delightful lowse
On Tweeda's bank or Cowdenknowes.
That taen wi' thy enchanting sang,
Our Scottish lads may round ye thrang,
Sae pleas'd they'll never fash again
To court you on Italian plain;
Soon will they guess ye only wear
The simple garb o' nature here;
Mair comely far, and fair to sight,
When in her easy cleedin' dight,
Than in disguise ye was before
On Tiber's or on Arno's shore.
O Bangour![1] now the hills and dales
Nae mair gie back thy tender tales!
The birks on Yarrow now deplore,
Thy mournfu' muse has left the shore.
Near what bright burn or crystal spring,
Did you your winsome whistle hing?
The muse shall there, wi' watery ee,
Gie the dunk swaird a tear for thee;
And Yarrow's genius, dowie dame!
Shall there forget her bluid-stain'd stream,
On thy sad grave to seek repose,
Who mourn'd her fate, condoled her woes.

[1] Mr Hamilton of Bangour [author of the beautiful ballad "The Braes of Yarrow."]

MY LAST WILL.

While sober folks, in humble prose,
Estate, and goods, and gear dispose,
A poet surely may disperse
His moveables in dogg'ril verse;
And, fearing death my blood will fast chill,
I hereby constitute my last Will.

Then, wit ye me to have made o'er
To Nature my poetic lore;
To her I give and grant the freedom
Of paying to the bards who need 'em
As many talents as she gave,
When I became the Muse's slave.
Thanks to the gods, who made me poor,
No lukewarm friends molest my door,
Who always show a busy care
For being legatee or heir.
Of this stamp none will ever follow
The youth that's favour'd by Apollo.
But to those few who know my case,
Nor thought a poet's friend disgrace,
The following trifles I bequeath,
And leave them with my kindest breath;
Nor will I burden them with payment
Of debts incurr'd, or coffin raiment.
As yet 'twas never my intent
To pass an Irish compliment.
To Jamie Rae,[1] who oft, *jocosus*,
With me partook of cheering doses,
I leave my snuff-box, to regale
His senses after drowsy meal,
And wake remembrance of a friend
Who loved him to his latter end:
But if this pledge should make him sorry,
And argue like *memento mori*,
He may bequeath't 'mong stubborn fellows
To all the finer feelings callous,
Who think that parting breath's a sneeze
To set sensations all at ease.
To Oliphant,[2] my friend, I legate
Those scrolls poetic which he may get,
With ample freedom to correct
Those writs I ne'er could retrospect;
With power to him and his succession
To print and sell a new impression:
And here I fix on Ossian's head
A domicil for Doric reed,
With as much power *ad musæ bona*
As I *in propria persona*.
To Hamilton[3] I give the task
Outstanding debts to crave and ask;
And that my Muse he may not dub ill,
For loading him with so much trouble,
My debts I leave him *singulatim*,
As they are mostly *desperatim*.
To thee, whose genius can provoke
Thy passions to the bowl or sock;
For love to thee, Woods![4] and the Nine,
Be my immortal Shakspeare thine.
Here may you through the alleys turn,
Where Falstaff laughs, where heroes mourn,
And boldly catch the glowing fire
That dwells in raptures on his lyre.
Now, at my dirge (if dirge there be),
Due to the Muse and poetry,
Let Hutchison[5] attend; for none is
More fit to guide the ceremonies:
As I, in health, with him would often
This clay-built mansion wash and soften,
So let my friends with him partake
The gen'rous wine at dirge or wake.

[1] Solicitor at law, and the poet's intimate friend.
[2] Late bookseller in Edinburgh.
[3] Solicitor at law, and the poet's intimate friend.
[4] [An esteemed actor in Edinburgh, and an intimate friend of the poet.]
[5] A tavern-keeper.

And I consent to registration
Of this my Will for preservation,
That patent it may be, and seen,
In Walter's[1] Weekly Magazine.
Witness whereof, these presents wrote are
By William Blair, the public notar,
And, for the tremor of my hand,
Are sign'd by him at my command.

His
R. + F.
Mark.

CODICIL

TO R. FERGUSSON'S LAST WILL.

Whereas, by test'ment, dated blank,
Enroll'd in the poetic rank,
'Midst brighter themes that weekly come
To make parade at Walter's drum,
I there, for certain weighty causes,
Produced some kind bequeathing clauses,
And left to friends (as 'tis the custom
With nothing till our death to trust 'em)
Some tokens of a pure regard
From one who lived and died a bard.
If poverty has any crime in
Teaching mankind the art of rhyming,
Then, by these presents, know all mortals,
Who come within the Muses' portals,
That I approve my will aforesaid,
But think that something might be more said;
And only now would humbly seek
The liberty to add and eek
To test'ment which already made is,
And duly registered, as said is.
To Tulloch,[2] who, in kind compassion,
Departed from the common fashion,
And gave to me, who never paid it,
Two flasks of port upon my credit,
I leave the flasks, as full of air
As his of ruddy moisture were;
Nor let him to complain begin—
He'll get no more of cat than skin.
To Walter Ruddiman, whose pen
Still screen'd me from the dunce's den,
I leave of phiz a picture, saving
To him the freedom of engraving
Therefrom a copy, to embellish,
And give his work a smarter relish;
For prints and frontispieces bind do
Our eyes to stationery window,
As superfluities in clothes
Set off and signalise the beaux.
Not that I think in reader's eyes
My visage will be deem'd a prize;
But works that others would outrival,
At glaring copperplates connive all;
And prints do well with him that led is
To shun the substance, hunt the shadows:
For, if a picture, 'tis enough—
A Newton, or a Jamie Duff.[1]
Nor would I recommend to Walter
This scheme of copperplates to alter;
Since others at the samen prices
Propose to give a dish that nice is,
Folks will desert his ordinary,
Unless, like theirs, his dishes vary.
To Williamson,[2] and his resetters,
Dispersing of the burial letters,
That they may pass with little cost
Fleet on the wings of penny-post;
Always providing and declaring,
That Peter shall be ever sparing
To make, as use is, the demand
For letters that may come to hand,
To me addressed while *locum tenens*
Of earth and of corporeal penance;
Where, if he fail, it is my will,
His legacy be void and null.
Let honest Greenlaw[3] be the staff
On which I lean for epitaph.
And that the Muses, at my end,
May know I had a learned friend,
Whate'er of character he's seen
In me, through humour or chagrin,
I crave his genius may narrate in
The strength of Ciceronian Latin.
Reserving to myself the power
To alter this at latest hour,
Cum privilegio revocare,
Without assigning *ratio quare:*
And I (as in the Will before did)
Consent this deed shall be recorded:
In testimonium cujus rei,
These presents are delivered by

R. FERGUSSON.

[1] [Walter Ruddiman, publisher of the Weekly Magazine, the work in which most of Fergusson's poems appeared.]
[2] A wine merchant.

[1] A fool who attended at funerals.
[2] The penny-post master.
[3] An excellent classical scholar.

POEMS IN ENGLISH.

PASTORAL I.—MORNING.

DAMON, ALEXIS.

DAMON.

Aurora now her welcome visit pays;
Stern darkness flies before her cheerful rays;
Cool circling breezes whirl along the air,
And early shepherds to the fields repair:
Lead we our flocks, then, to the mountain's brow,
Where junipers and thorny brambles grow;
Where founts of water 'midst the daisies spring,
And soaring larks and tuneful linnets sing;
Your pleasing song shall teach our flocks to stray,
While sounding echoes smooth the sylvan lay.

ALEXIS.

'Tis thine to sing the graces of the morn,
The zephyr trembling o'er the ripening corn;
'Tis thine with ease to chaunt the rural lay,
While bubbling fountains to your numbers play.
No piping swain that treads the verdant field,
But to your music and your verse must yield:
Sing then—for here we may with safety keep
Our sportive lambkins on this mossy steep.

DAMON.

With ruddy glow the sun adorns the land;
The pearly dew-drops on the bushes stand;
The lowing oxen from the folds we hear;
And snowy flocks upon the hills appear.

ALEXIS.

How sweet the murmurs of the neighbouring rill!
Sweet are the slumbers which its floods distil,
Through pebbly channels winding as they run,
And brilliant sparkling to the rising sun.

DAMON.

Behold Edina's lofty turrets rise!
Her structures fair adorn the eastern skies:
As Pentland's cliffs o'ertop yon distant plain,
So she the cities on our north domain.

ALEXIS.

Boast not of cities, or their lofty towers,
Where discord all her baneful influence pours;

The homely cottage, and the wither'd tree,
With sweet content, shall be preferr'd by me.

DAMON.

The hemlock dire shall please the heifer's taste,
Our lands like wild Arabia be waste,
The bee forget to range for winter's food,
Ere I forsake the forest and the flood.

ALEXIS.

Ye balmy breezes! wave the verdant field;
Clouds! all your bounties, all your moisture yield;
That fruits and herbage may our farms adorn,
And furrow'd ridges teem with loaded corn.

DAMON.

The year already hath propitious smil'd;
Gentle in spring-time, and in summer mild;
No cutting blasts have hurt my tender dams;
No hoary frosts destroy'd my infant lambs.

ALEXIS.

If Ceres crown with joy the bounteous year,
A sacred altar to her shrine I'll rear;
A vigorous ram shall bleed, whose curling horns
His woolly neck and hardy front adorns.

DAMON.

Teach me, oh Pan! to tune the slender reed,
No favourite ram shall at thine altars bleed;
Each breathing morn thy woodland verse I'll sing,
And hollow dens shall with the numbers ring.

ALEXIS.

Apollo! lend me thy celestial lyre,
The woods in concert join at thy desire;
At morn, at noon, at night, I'll tune the lay,
And bid fleet Echo bear the sound away.

DAMON.

Sweet are the breezes when cool eve returns,
To lowing herds, when raging Sirius burns:
Not half so sweetly winds the breeze along,
As does the murmur of your pleasing song.

ALEXIS.

To hear your strains the cattle spurn their food,
The feather'd songsters leave their tender brood;
Around your seat the silent lambs advance,
And scrambling he-goats on the mountains dance.

DAMON.

But haste, Alexis, reach yon leafy shade,
Which mantling ivy round the oaks hath made:
There we'll retire, and list the warbling note
That flows melodious from the blackbird's throat;
Your easy numbers shall his songs inspire,
And every warbler join the general choir.

PASTORAL II.—NOON.

CORYDON, TIMANTHES.

CORYDON.

The sun the summit of his orb hath gain'd;
No flecker'd clouds his azure path hath stain'd;
Our pregnant ewes around us cease to graze,
Stung with the keenness of his sultry rays;
The weary bullock from the yoke is led,
And youthful shepherds from the plains are fled
To dusky shades, where scarce a glimmering ray
Can dart its lustre through the leafy spray.
Yon cooling rivulet where the waters gleam,
Where springing flowers adorn the limpid stream,
Invites us where the drooping willow grows,
To guide our flocks and take a cool repose.

TIMANTHES.

To thy advice a grateful ear I'll lend,
The shades I'll court where slender osiers bend;
Our weanlings young shall crop the rising flower,
While we retire to yonder twining bower;
The woods shall echo back thy cheerful strains,
Admired by all our Caledonian swains.

CORYDON.

There have I oft with gentle Delia stray'd,
Amidst the embowering solitary shade,
Before the gods to thwart my wishes strove,
By blasting every pleasing glimpse of love:
For Delia wanders o'er the Anglian plains,
Where civil discord and sedition reigns.
There Scotia's sons in odious light appear,
Though we for them have waved the hostile spear:
For them my sire, enwrapp'd in curdled gore,
Breathed his last moments on a foreign shore.

TIMANTHES.

Six lunar months, my friend, will soon expire,
And she return to crown your fond desire.
For her, oh rack not your desponding mind!
In Delia's breast a generous flame's confined,
That burns for Corydon, whose piping lay
Hath caused the tedious moments steal away;
Whose strains melodious moved the falling floods
To whisper Delia to the rising woods.
Oh! if your sighs could aid the floating gales,
That favourably swell their lofty sails,
Ne'er should your sobs their rapid flight give o'er,
Till Delia's presence graced our northern shore!

CORYDON.

Though Delia greet my love, I sigh in vain,
Such joy unbounded can I ne'er obtain.
Her sire a thousand fleeces numbers o'er,
And grassy hills increase his milky store;
While the weak fences of a scanty fold
Will all my sheep and fattening lambkins hold.

TIMANTHES.

Ah, hapless youth! although the early Muse
Painted her semblance on thy youthful brows;
Though she with laurels twined thy temples round,
And in thy ear distill'd the magic sound;
A cheerless poverty attends thy woes,
Your song melodious unrewarded flows.

CORYDON.

Think not, Timanthes, that for wealth I pine,
Though all the Fates to make me poor combine:
Tay, bounding o'er his banks with awful sway,
Bore all my corn and all my flocks away.
Of Jove's dread precepts did I e'er complain?
E'er curse the rapid flood or dashing rain?
Even now I sigh not for my former store,
But wish the gods had destined Delia poor.

TIMANTHES.

'Tis joy, my friend, to think I can repay
The loss you bore by autumn's rigid sway.
Yon fertile meadow where the daisies spring,
Shall yearly pasture to your heifers bring:
Your flock with mine shall on yon mountain feed,
Cheer'd by the warbling of your tuneful reed:
No more shall Delia's ever-fretful sire
Against your hopes and ardent love conspire.
Roused by her smiles, you'll tune the happy lay,
While hills responsive waft your songs away.

CORYDON.

May plenteous crops your irksome labour crown,
May hoodwink'd Fortune cease her envious frown;
May riches still increase with growing years,
Your flocks be numerous as your silver hairs.

TIMANTHES.

But, lo! the heat invites us at our ease
To court the twining shades and cooling breeze;
Our languid joints we'll peaceably recline,
And 'midst the flowers and opening blossoms dine.

PASTORAL III.—NIGHT.

AMYNTAS, FLORELLUS.

AMYNTAS.

While yet grey twilight does his empire hold,
Drive all our heifers to the peaceful fold;
With sullied wing grim darkness soars along,
And larks to nightingales resign the song;
The weary ploughman flies the waving fields,
To taste what fare his humble cottage yields;
As bees, that daily through the meadows roam,
Feed on the sweets they have prepared at home.

FLORELLUS.

The grassy meads that smiled serenely gay,
Cheer'd by the ever-burning lamp of day,
In dusky hue attired, are cramp'd with colds,
And springing flowerets shut their crimson folds.

AMYNTAS.

What awful silence reigns throughout the shade!
The peaceful olive bends his drooping head;
No sound is heard o'er all the gloomy maze;
Wide o'er the deep the fiery meteors blaze.

FLORELLUS.

The west, yet tinged with sol's effulgent ray,
With feeble light illumes our homeward way;
The glowing stars with keener lustre burn,
While round the earth their glowing axles turn.

AMYNTAS.

What mighty power conducts the stars on high?
Who bids these comets through our system fly?
Who wafts the lightning to the icy pole,
And through our regions bids the thunders roll?

FLORELLUS.

But say, what mightier power from nought could raise
The earth, the sun, and all that fiery maze
Of distant stars, that gild the azure sky,
And through the void in settled orbits fly?

AMYNTAS.

That righteous power, before whose heavenly eye
The stars are nothing, and the planets die;
Whose breath divine supports our mortal frame,
Who made the lion wild and lambkin tame.

FLORELLUS.

At his command the bounteous spring returns;
Hot summer, raging o'er the Atlantic, burns;
The yellow autumn crowns our sultry toil,
And winter's snows prepare the cumbrous soil.

AMYNTAS.

By him the morning darts his purple ray;
To him the birds their early homage pay;
With vocal harmony the meadows ring,
While swains in concert heavenly praises sing.

FLORELLUS.

Sway'd by his word, the nutrient dews descend,
And growing pastures to the moisture bend;
The vernal blossoms sip his falling showers,
The meads are garnish'd with his opening flowers.

AMYNTAS.

For man, the object of his chiefest care,
Fowls he hath form'd to wing the ambient air;
For him the steer his lusty neck doth bend,
Fishes for him their scaly fins extend.

FLORELLUS.

Wide o'er the orient sky the moon appears,
A foe to darkness and his idle fears;
Around her orb the stars in clusters shine,
And distant planets 'tend her silver shrine.

AMYNTAS.

Hush'd are the busy numbers of the day,
On downy couch they sleep their hours away.
Hail, balmy sleep, that soothes the troubled mind!
Lock'd in thy arms our cares a refuge find.
Oft do you tempt us with delusive dreams,
When wildering fancy darts her dazzling beams:
Asleep, the lover with his mistress strays
Through lonely thickets and untrodden ways;
But when pale Cynthia's sable empire's fled,
And hovering slumbers shun the morning bed,
Roused by the dawn, he wakes with frequent sigh,
And all his flattering visions quickly fly.

FLORELLUS.

Now owls and bats infest the midnight scene,
Dire snakes envenom'd twine along the green:
Forsook by man the rivers mourning glide,
And groaning echoes swell the noisy tide.
Straight to our cottage let us bend our way,
My drowsy powers confess sleep's magic sway.
Easy and calm upon our couch we'll lie,
While sweet reviving slumbers round our pillows fly.

THE COMPLAINT.

A PASTORAL.

Near the heart of a fair spreading grove,
Whose foliage shaded the green,
A shepherd, repining at love,
In anguish was heard to complain:—

"Oh Cupid! thou wanton young boy!
Since, with thy invisible dart,
Thou hast robb'd a fond youth of his joy,
In return grant the wish of his heart.

Send a shaft so severe from thy bow
(His pining, his sighs to remove),
That Stella, once wounded, may know
How keen are the arrows of love.

No swain once so happy as I,
Nor tuned with more pleasure the reed;
My breast never vented a sigh,
Till Stella approach'd the gay mead.

With mirth, with contentment endow'd,
My hours they flew wantonly by;
I sought no repose in the wood,
Nor from my few sheep would I fly.

Now my reed I have carelessly broke,
Its melody pleases no more:
I pay no regard to a flock
That seldom hath wander'd before.

Oh, Stella! whose beauty so fair
Excels the bright splendour of day,
Ah! have you no pity to share
With Damon thus fall'n to decay?

For you have I quitted the plain,
Forsaken my sheep and my fold:
For you in dull languor and pain
My tedious moments are told.

For you have my roses grown pale;
They have faded untimely away:
And will not such beauty bewail
A shepherd thus fall'n to decay?

Since your eyes still requite me with scorn,
And kill with their merciless ray;
Like a star at the dawning of morn,
I fall to their lustre a prey.

Some swain who shall mournfully go
To whisper love's sigh to the shade,
Will haply some charity show,
And under the turf see me laid:

Would my love but in pity appear
On the spot where he moulds my cold grave,
And bedew the green sod with a tear,
'Tis all the remembrance I crave."

To the sward then his visage he turn'd;
'Twas wan as the lilies in May:
Fair Stella may see him inurn'd—
He hath sigh'd all his sorrows away.

THE DECAY OF FRIENDSHIP.

A PASTORAL ELEGY.

When Gold, man's sacred deity, did smile,
My friends were plenty, and my sorrows few;
Mirth, love, and bumpers, did my hours beguile,
And arrow'd Cupids round my slumbers flew.

What shepherd then could boast more happy days?
My lot was envied by each humbler swain;
Each bard in smooth eulogium sang my praise,
And Damon listen'd to the guileful strain.

Flattery! alluring as the syren's lay,
And as deceitful thy enchanting tongue,
How have you taught my wavering mind to stray,
Charm'd and attracted by the baneful song!

My pleasant cottage, shelter'd from the gale,
Arose, with moss and rural ivy bound;
And scarce a floweret in my lowly vale
But was with bees of various colours crown'd.

Free o'er my lands the neighbouring flocks could roam;
How welcome were the swains and flocks to me!
The shepherds kindly were invited home,
To chase the hours in merriment and glee.

To wake emotions in the youthful mind,
Strephon, with voice melodious, tuned the song;
Each sylvan youth the sounding chorus join'd,
Fraught with contentment 'midst the festive throng.

My clustering grape compensed their magic skill;
The bowl capacious swell'd in purple tide,
To shepherds, liberal as the crystal rill
Spontaneous gurgling from the mountain's side.

But, ah! these youthful sportive hours are fled;
These scenes of jocund mirth are now no more:
No healing slumbers 'tend my humble bed,
No friends condole the sorrows of the poor.

And what avail the thoughts of former joy?
What comfort bring they in the adverse hour?
Can they the canker-worm of care destroy,
Or brighten fortune's discontented lour?

He who hath long traversed the fertile plain,
Where nature in its fairest vesture smiled,
Will he not cheerless view the fairy scene,
When lonely wandering o'er the barren wild?

For now pale poverty, with haggard eye
And rueful aspect, darts her gloomy ray;
My wonted guests their proffer'd aid deny,
And from the paths of Damon steal away.

Thus, when fair summer's lustre gilds the lawn,
When ripening blossoms deck the spreading tree,
The birds with melody salute the dawn,
And o'er the daisy hangs the humming bee.

But when the beauties of the circling year
In chilling frosts and furious storms decay,
No more the bees upon the plains appear,
No more the warblers hail the infant day.

To the lone corner of some distant shore,
In dreary devious pilgrimage I'll fly,
And wander pensive, where deceit no more
Shall trace my footsteps with a mortal eye.

There solitary saunter o'er the beach,
And to the murmuring surge my griefs disclose;
There shall my voice in plaintive wailings teach
The hollow caverns to resound my woes.

Sweet are the waters to the parched tongue;
Sweet are the blossoms to the wanton bee;
Sweet to the shepherd sounds the lark's shrill song;
But sweeter far is solitude to me.

Adieu, ye fields, where I have fondly stray'd!
Ye swains, who once the favourite Damon knew!
Farewell, ye sharers of my bounty's aid!
Ye sons of base ingratitude, adieu!

AGAINST REPINING AT FORTUNE.

Though in my narrow bounds of rural toil
No obelisk or splendid column rise;
Though partial fortune still averts her smile,
And views my labours with condemning eyes;

Yet all the gorgeous vanity of state
I can contemplate with a cool disdain;
Nor shall the honours of the gay and great
E'er wound my bosom with an envious pain.

Avails it aught the grandeur of their halls,
With all the glories of the pencil hung,
If truth, fair truth! within the unhallow'd walls
Hath never whisper'd with her seraph tongue?

Avails it aught, if music's gentle lay
Hath oft been echoed by the sounding dome,
If music cannot soothe their griefs away,
Or change a wretched to a happy home?

Though fortune should invest them with her spoils,
And banish poverty with look severe—
Enlarge their confines, and decrease their toils—
Ah! what avails, if she increase their care?

Though fickle, she disclaim my moss-grown cot,
Nature! thou look'st with more impartial eyes:
Smile thou, fair goddess! on my sober lot;
I'll neither fear her fall nor court her rise.

When early larks shall cease the matin song;
When Philomel at night resigns her lays;
When melting numbers to the owl belong—
Then shall the reed be silent in thy praise.

Can he who with the tide of fortune sails,
More pleasure from the sweets of nature share?
Do zephyrs waft him more ambrosial gales,
Or do his groves a gayer livery wear?

To me the heavens unveil as pure a sky;
To me the flowers as rich a bloom disclose;
The morning beams as radiant to my eye;
And darkness guides me to as sweet repose.

If luxury their lavish dainties piles,
And still attends upon their fated hours,
Doth health reward them with her open smiles,
Or exercise enlarge their feeble powers?

'Tis not in richest mines of Indian gold,
That man this jewel, happiness, can find,
If his unfeeling breast, to virtue cold,
Denies her entrance to his ruthless mind.

Wealth, pomp, and honour, are but gaudy toys—
Alas, how poor the pleasures they impart!
Virtue's the sacred source of all the joys
That claim a lasting mansion in the heart.

CONSCIENCE.

AN ELEGY.

——— Leave her to heaven,
And to the thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her.—SHAKSPEARE.

No choiring warblers flutter in the sky;
Phœbus no longer holds his radiant sway;
While nature, with a melancholy eye,
Bemoans the loss of his departed ray.

Oh happy he, whose conscience knows no guile!
He to the sable night can bid farewell;
From cheerless objects close his eyes a while,
Within the silken folds of sleep to dwell.

Elysian dreams shall hover round his bed,
His soul shall wing, on pleasing fancies borne,
To shining vales where flowerets lift their head,
Waked by the breathing zephyrs of the morn.

But wretched he, whose foul reproachful deeds
Can through an angry conscience wound his rest;
His eye too oft the balmy comfort needs,
Though slumber seldom knows him as her guest.

To calm the raging tumults of his soul,
If wearied nature should an hour demand,
Around his bed the sheeted spectres howl;
Red with revenge the grinning furies stand.

Nor state nor grandeur can his pain allay;
Where shall he find a requiem to his woes?
Power cannot chase the frightful gloom away,
Nor music lull him to a kind repose.

Where is the king that conscience fears to chide?
Conscience, that candid judge of right and wrong,
Will o'er the secrets of each heart preside,
Nor awed by pomp, nor tamed by soothing song.

DAMON TO HIS FRIENDS.

The billows of life are supprest;
Its tumults, its toils, disappear;
To relinquish the storms that are past,
I think on the sunshine that's near.

Dame Fortune and I are agreed;
Her frowns I no longer endure;
For the goddess has kindly decreed
That Damon no more shall be poor.

Now riches will ope the dim eyes,
To view the increase of my store;
And many my friendship will prize,
Who never knew Damon before.

But those I renounce and abjure
Who carried contempt in their eye;
May poverty still be their dower,
That could look on misfortune awry!

Ye powers that weak mortals govern,
Keep pride at his bay from my mind;
Oh let me not haughtily learn
To despise the few friends that were kind!

For theirs was a feeling sincere,
'Twas free from delusion and art:
Oh may I that friendship revere,
And hold it yet dear to my heart!

By which was I ever forgot?
It was both my physician and cure,
That still found the way to my cot,
Although I was wretched and poor.

'Twas balm to my canker-tooth'd care;
The wound of affliction it heal'd;
In distress it was pity's soft tear,
And naked, cold poverty's shield.

Attend, ye kind youth of the plain!
Who oft with my sorrows condoled;
You cannot be deaf to the strain,
Since Damon is master of gold.

I have chose a sweet sylvan retreat,
Bedeck'd with the beauties of spring;
Around, my flocks nibble and bleat,
While the musical choristers sing.

I force not the waters to stand
In an artful canal at my door;
But a river, at nature's command,
Meanders both limpid and pure.

She's the goddess that darkens my bowers
With tendrils of ivy and vine;
She tutors my shrubs and my flowers;
Her taste is the standard of mine.

What a pleasing diversified group
Of trees has she spread o'er my ground!
She has taught the grave larix to droop,
And the birch to shed odours around.

For whom has she perfumed my groves?
For whom has she cluster'd my vine?
If friendship despise my alcoves,
They'll ne'er be recesses of mine.

He who tastes his grape juices by stealth,
Without chosen companions to share,
Is the basest of slaves to his wealth,
And the pitiful minion of care.

Oh come, and with Damon retire
Amidst the green umbrage embower'd!
Your mirth and your songs to inspire,
Shall the juice of the vintage be pour'd.

Oh come, ye dear friends of his youth!
Of all his good fortune partake;
Nor think 'tis departing from truth,
To say 'twas preserved for your sake.

RETIREMENT.

Come, Inspiration! from thy vernal bower,
To thy celestial voice attune the lyre;
Smooth gliding strains in sweet profusion pour,
And aid my numbers with seraphic fire.

Under a lonely spreading oak I lay,
My head upon the daisied green reclined;
The evening sun beam'd forth his parting ray,
The foliage bended to the hollow wind.

There gentle sleep my acting powers supprest;
The city's distant hum was heard no more;
Yet fancy suffer'd not the mind to rest,
Ever obedient to her wakeful power.

She led me near a crystal fountain's noise,
Where undulating waters sportive play;
Where a young comely swain, with pleasing voice,
In tender accents sang his sylvan lay.

"Adieu, ye baneful pleasures of the town!
Farewell, ye giddy and unthinking throng!
Without regret your foibles I disown;
Themes more exalted claim the Muse's song.

Your stony hearts no social feelings share;
Your souls of distant sorrows ne'er partake;
Ne'er do you listen to the needy prayer,
Nor drop a tear for tender pity's sake.

Welcome, ye fields, ye fountains, and ye groves!
Ye flowery meadows, and extensive plains!
Where soaring warblers pour their plaintive loves,
Each landscape cheering with their vocal strains.

Here rural beauty rears her pleasing shrine;
She on the margin of each streamlet glows;
Where, with the blooming hawthorn, roses twine,
And the fair lily of the valley grows.

Here chastity may wander unassail'd
Through fields where gay seducers cease to rove;
Where open vice o'er virtue ne'er prevail'd,
Where all is innocence and all is love.

Peace with her olive wand triumphant reigns,
Guarding secure the peasant's humble bed;
Envy is banish'd from the happy plains,
And defamation's busy tongue is laid.

Health and contentment usher in the morn;
With jocund smiles they cheer the rural swain;
For which the peer, to pompous titles born,
Forsaken sighs, but all his sighs are vain.

For the calm comforts of an easy mind
In yonder lonely cot delight to dwell,
And leave the statesman for the labouring hind,
The regal palace for the lowly cell.

Ye who to wisdom would devote your hours,
And far from riot, far from discord stray!
Look back disdainful on the city's towers,
Where pride, where folly, point the slippery way.

Pure flows the limpid stream in crystal tides
Thro' rocks, thro' dens, and ever verdant vales,
Till to the town's unhallow'd wall it glides,
Where all its purity and lustre fails."

ODE TO HOPE.

Hope! lively cheerer of the mind,
In lieu of real bliss design'd,
Come from thy ever verdant bower
To chase the dull and lingering hour:
Oh! bring, attending on thy reign,
All thy ideal fairy train,
To animate the lifeless clay,
And bear my sorrows hence away.

Hence, gloomy-featured black despair,
With all thy frantic furies fly,
Nor rend my breast with gnawing care,
For Hope in lively garb is nigh.

Let pining discontentment mourn;
Let dull-eyed melancholy grieve;
Since pleasing Hope must reign by turn,
And every bitter thought relieve.

Oh smiling Hope! in adverse hour
I feel thy influencing power:
Though frowning fortune fix my lot
In some defenceless lonely cot,
Where poverty, with empty hands,
In pallid meagre aspect stands,
Thou canst enrobe me 'midst the great,
With all the crimson pomp of state,
Where luxury invites his guests
To pall them with his lavish feasts.
What cave so dark, what gloom so drear,
So black with horror, dead with fear,
But thou canst dart thy streaming ray,
And change close night to open day?

Health is attendant in thy radiant train;
Round her the whispering zephyrs gently play;
Behold her gladly tripping o'er the plain,
Bedeck'd with rural sweets and garlands gay!

When vital spirits are deprest,
And heavy languor clogs the breast,
With more than Esculapian power
Endued, blest Hope! 'tis thine to cure:
For oft thy friendly aid avails,
When all the strength of physic fails.

Nay, even though death should aim his dart,
I know he lifts his arm in vain,
Since thou this lesson canst impart—
Mankind but die to live again.

Deprived of thee must banners fall:
But where a living Hope is found,
The legions shout at danger's call,
And victors are triumphant crown'd.

Come, then, bright Hope! in smiles array'd,
Revive us by thy quickening breath;
Then shall we never be afraid
To walk through danger and through death.

THE RIVERS OF SCOTLAND.

AN ODE.

Set to Music by Mr Collet.

O'er Scotia's parched land the Naïads flew,
From towering hills explored her shelter'd vales,
Caused Forth in wild meanders please the view,
And lift her waters to the zephyr's gales.

Where the glad swain surveys his fertile fields,
And reaps the plenty which his harvest yields,

Here did these lovely nymphs unseen,
Oft wander by the river's side,
And oft unbind their tresses green,
To bathe them in the fluid tide.

Then to the shady grottoes would retire,
And sweetly echo to the warbling choir;

Or to the rushing waters tune their shells,
To call up Echo from the woods,
Or from the rocks or crystal floods,
Or from surrounding banks, or hills, or dells.

CHORUS.

Or to the rushing waters, &c.

When the cool fountains first their springs forsook,
Murmuring smoothly to the azure main,
Exulting Neptune then his trident shook,
And waved his waters gently to the plain.
The friendly Tritons, on his chariot borne,
With cheeks dilated blew the hollow-sounding horn.

Now Lothian and Fifan shores,
Resounding to the mermaid's song,
Gladly emit their limpid stores,
And bid them smoothly sail along

To Neptune's empire, and with him to roll
Round the revolving sphere from pole to pole;

To guard Britannia from envious foes;
To view her angry vengeance hurl'd
In awful thunder round the world,
And trembling nations bending to her blows.

CHORUS.

To guard Britannia, &c.

High towering on the zephyr's breezy wing,
Swift fly the Naïads from Fortha's shores,
And to the southern airy mountains bring
Their sweet enchantment and their magic powers.

Each nymph her favourite willow takes;
The earth with feverous tremor shakes;
The stagnant lakes obey their call;
Streams o'er the grassy pastures fall.

Tweed spreads her waters to the lucid ray;
Upon the dimpled surf the sunbeams play.

On her green banks the tuneful shepherd lies:
Charm'd with the music of his reed,
Amidst the wavings of the Tweed,
From sky-reflecting streams the river-nymphs arise.

CHORUS.

On her green banks, &c.

The listening Muses heard the shepherd play;
Fame with her brazen trump proclaim'd his name,
And to attend the easy graceful lay,
Pan from Arcadia to Tweeda came.

Fond of the change, along the banks he stray'd,
And sang, unmindful of the Arcadian shade.

AIR—*Tweed-side.*

Attend, every fanciful swain,
Whose notes softly flow from the reed;
With harmony guide the sweet strain,
To sing of the beauties of Tweed:

Where the music of woods and of streams
In soothing sweet melody join,
To enliven your pastoral themes,
And make human numbers divine.

Ye warblers from the vocal grove,
The tender woodland strain approve,
While Tweed in smoother cadence glides
O'er flowery vales in gentle tides;
And as she rolls her silver waves along,
Murmurs and sighs to quit the rural song.
Scotia's great Genius, in russet clad,
From the cool sedgy bank exalts her head;
In joyful rapture she the change espies,
Sees living streams descend and groves arise.

AIR—*Gilderoy.*

As sable clouds at early day
Oft dim the shining skies,
So gloomy thoughts create dismay,
And lustre leaves her eyes.

"Ye powers! are Scotia's ample fields
With so much beauty graced,
To have those sweets your bounty yields
By foreign foes defaced?
Oh Jove! at whose supreme command
The limpid fountains play,
O'er Caledonia's northern land
Let restless waters stray.
Since from the void creation rose,
Thou'st made a sacred vow,
That Caledon to foreign foes
Should ne'er be known to bow."

The mighty Thunderer on his sapphire throne,
In mercy's robes attired, heard the sweet voice
Of female woe—soft as the moving song
Of Philomela 'midst the evening shades;
And thus return'd an answer to her prayers:

"Where birks at Nature's call arise;
Where fragrance hails the vaulted skies;
Where my own oak its umbrage spreads,
Delightful 'midst the woody shades;
Where ivy mouldering rocks entwines;
Where breezes bend the lofty pines;
There shall the laughing Naïads stray,
'Midst the sweet banks of winding Tay."

From the dark womb of earth Tay's waters spring,
Ordain'd by Jove's unalterable voice;
The sounding lyre celestial muses string;
The choiring songsters in the grove rejoice.
Each fount its crystal fluid pours,
Which from surrounding mountains flow;
The river bathes its verdant shores;
Cool o'er the surf the breezes blow.

Let England's sons extol their gardens fair;
Scotland may freely boast her generous streams:
Their soil more fertile, and their milder air;
Her fishes sporting in the solar beams.

Thames, Humber, Severn, all must yield the bay
To the pure streams of Forth, of Tweed, and Tay.

CHORUS.

Thames, Humber, &c.

Oh Scotia! when such beauty claims
A mansion near thy flowing streams,
Ne'er shall stern Mars, in iron car,
Drive his proud coursers to the war;
But fairy forms shall strew around
Their olives on the peaceful ground;
And turtles join the warbling throng,
To usher in the morning song;
Or shout in chorus all the livelong day,
From the green banks of Forth, of Tweed, and Tay.

When gentle Phœbe's friendly light
In silver radiance clothes the night,
Still music's ever-varying strains
Shall tell the lovers Cynthia reigns;
And woo them to her midnight bowers,
Among the fragrant dew-clad flowers,
Where every rock, and hill, and dale,
With echoes greet the nightingale,
Whose pleasing, soft, pathetic tongue,
To kind condolence tunes the song;
And often wins the love-sick swain to stray,
To hear the tender variegated lay,
Through the dark woods of Forth, of Tweed, and Tay.

Hail, native streams, and native groves!
Oozy caverns, green alcoves!
Retreats for Cytherea's reign,
With all the graces in her train.
Hail, Fancy! thou whose ray so bright
Dispels the glimmering taper's light!
Come in aërial vesture blue,
Ever pleasing, ever new;
In these recesses deign to dwell
With me in yonder moss-clad cell:
Then shall my reed successful tune the lay,
In numbers wildly warbling as they stray
Through the glad banks of Forth, of Tweed, and Tay.

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CONTRASTED.

IN AN EPISTLE TO A FRIEND.

From noisy bustle, from contention free,
Far from the busy town I careless loll;
Not like swain Tityrus, or the bards of old,
Under a beechen, venerable shade,
But on a furzy heath, where blooming broom
And thorny whins the spacious plains adorn.
Here health sits smiling on my youthful brow:
For ere the sun beams forth his earliest ray,
And all the east with yellow radiance crowns;
Ere dame Aurora, from her purple bed,
'Gins with her kindling blush to paint the sky;
The soaring lark, morn's cheerful harbinger,
And linnet joyful, fluttering from the bush,
Stretch their small throats in vocal melody,
To hail the dawn, and drowsy sleep exhale
From man, frail man! on downy softness stretch'd.
Such pleasing scenes Edina cannot boast;
For there the slothful slumber seal'd mine eyes,
Till nine successive strokes the clock had knell'd.
There, not the lark, but fish-wives' noisy screams,
And inundations plunged from ten house height,
With smell more fragrant than the spicy groves
Of Indus fraught with all her orient stores,
Roused me from sleep—not sweet refreshing sleep,
But sleep infested with the burning sting
Of bug infernal, who the live-long night
With direst suction sipp'd my liquid gore.
There, gloomy vapours in our zenith reign'd,
And fill'd with irksome pestilence the air.
There, lingering sickness held his feeble court,
Rejoicing in the havoc he had made;
And death, grim death! with all his ghastly train,
Watch'd the broke slumbers of Edina's sons.
Hail, rosy health! thou pleasing antidote
'Gainst troubling cares!—all hail, these rural fields,
Those winding rivulets and verdant shades,
Where thou, the heaven-born goddess, deign'st to dwell!
With thee the hind, upon his simple fare,
Lives cheerful, and from Heaven no more demands.
But ah! how vast, how terrible the change
With him who night by night in sickness pines!
Him, nor his splendid equipage can please,
Nor all the pageantry the world can boast;
Nay, not the consolation of his friends
Can aught avail; his hours are anguish all;
Nor cease till envious death hath closed the scene.
But, Carlos, if we court this maid celestial;
Whether we through meandering rivers stray,
Or midst the city's jarring noise remain,
Let temperance, health's blythe concomitant,
To our desires and appetites set bounds,
Else, cloy'd at last, we surfeit every joy;
Our slacken'd nerves reject their wonted spring;
We reap the fruits of our unkindly lusts,
And feebly totter to the silent grave.

ODE TO PITY.

To what sequester'd gloomy shade
Hath ever gentle Pity stray'd?
What brook is water'd from her eyes?
What gales convey her tender sighs?
Unworthy of her grateful lay,
She hath despised the great, the gay;
Nay, all the feelings she imparts
Are far estranged from human hearts.
Ah, Pity! whither would'st thou fly
From human heart, from human eye?
Are desert woods and twilight groves,
The scenes the sobbing pilgrim loves?
If there thou dwell'st, oh Pity! say,
In what lone path you pensive stray.
I'll know thee by the lily's hue,
Besprinkled with the morning's dew;
For thou wilt never blush to wear
The pallid look and falling tear.

In broken cadence from thy tongue,
Oft have we heard the mournful song;
Oft have we view'd the loaded bier
Bedew'd with Pity's softest tear.
Her sighs and tears were ne'er denied,
When innocence and virtue died.
But in this black and iron age,
Where vice and all his demons rage,
Though bells in solemn peals are rung,
Though dirge in mournful verse is sung,
Soon will the vain parade be o'er,
Their name, their memory, be no more,
Who love and innocence despised,
And every virtue sacrificed.
Here pity, as a statue dumb,
Will pay no tribute to the tomb;
Or wake the memory of those
Who never felt for others' woes.
Thou mistress of the feeling heart!
Thy powers of sympathy impart:
If mortals would but fondly prize
Thy falling tears, thy passing sighs,
Then should wan poverty no more
Walk feebly from the rich man's door;
Humility should vanquish pride,
And vice be drove from virtue's side:
Then happiness at length should reign;
The golden age begin again.

ON THE COLD MONTH OF APRIL, 1771.

Oh! who can hold a fire in his hand
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite
By bare imagination of a feast?
Or wallow naked in December's snow,
By thinking on fantastic summer's heat?
Shakspeare's Richard II.

Poets in vain have hail'd the opening spring,
In tender accents woo'd the blooming maid;
In vain have taught the April birds to wing
Their flight through fields in verdant hue array'd.

The Muse, in every season taught to sing,
Amidst the desert snows, by fancy's powers,
Can elevated soar, on placid wing,
To climes where spring her kindest influence showers.

April, once famous for the zephyr mild;
For sweets that early in the garden grow;
Say, how converted to this cheerless wild,
Rushing with torrents of dissolving snow?

Nursed by the moisture of a gentle shower,
Thy foliage oft hath sounded to the breeze;
Oft did thy choristers melodious pour
Their melting numbers through the shady trees.

Fair have I seen thy morn in smiles array'd,
With crimson blush bepaint the eastern sky;
But now the dawn creeps mournful o'er the glade,
Shrouded in colours of a sable dye.

So have I seen the fair, with laughing eye,
And visage cheerful as the smiling morn,
Alternate changing for the heaving sigh,
Or frowning aspect of contemptuous scorn.

Life! what art thou?—a variegated scene
Of mingled light and shade, of joy and woe;
A sea where calms and storms promiscuous reign;
A stream where sweet and bitter jointly flow.

Mute are the plains; the shepherd pipes no more;
The reed's forsaken, and the tender flock;
While echo, listening to the tempest's roar,
In silence wanders o'er the beetling rock.

Winter, too potent for the solar ray,
Bestrides the blast, ascends his icy throne,
And views Britannia, subject to his sway,
Floating emergent on the frigid zone.

Thou savage tyrant of the fretful sky!
Wilt thou for ever in our zenith reign?
To Greenland's seas, congeal'd in chillness fly,
Where howling monsters tread the bleak domain.

Relent, oh Boreas! leave thy frozen cell;
Resign to spring her portion of the year;
Let west winds temperate wave the flowing gale,
And hills, and vales, and woods, a vernal aspect wear.

THE SIMILE.

At noontide, as Colin and Sylvia lay
Within a cool jessamine bower,
A butterfly, waked by the heat of the day,
Was sipping the juice of each flower.

Near the shade of this covert, a young shepherd boy
The gaudy brisk flutterer spies,
Who held it as pastime to seek and destroy
Each beautiful insect that flies.

From the lily he hunted this fly to the rose,
From the rose to the lily again;
Till, weary with tracing its motions, he chose
To leave the pursuit with disdain.

Then Colin to Sylvia smilingly said,
"Amyntor has followed you long;
From him, like the butterfly, still have you fled,
Though woo'd by his musical tongue.

Beware in persisting to start from his arms,
But with his fond wishes comply;
Come, take my advice; or he's pall'd with your charms,
Like the youth and the beautiful fly."

Says Sylvia—"Colin, thy simile's just,
But still to Amyntor I'm coy;
For I vow she's a simpleton blind that would trust
A swain, when he courts to destroy."

THE BUGS.

Thou source of song sublime! thou chiefest Muse!
Whose sacred fountain of immortal fame
Bedew'd the flowerets cull'd for Homer's brow,
When he on Grecian plains the battles sang
Of frogs and mice—do thou through fancy's maze
Of sportive pastime, lead a lowly Muse
Her rites to join, while, with a faltering voice,
She sings of reptiles yet in song unknown.
Nor you, ye bards! who oft have struck the lyre,
And tuned it to the movement of the spheres,
In harmony divine, reproach the lays,
Which, though they wind not through the starry host
Of bright creation, or on earth delight
To hunt the murmuring cadence of the floods
Through scenes where nature, with a hand profuse,
Hath lavish strew'd her gems of precious dye;
Yet, in the small existence of a gnat,
Or tiny bug, doth she, with equal skill,
If not transcending, stamp her wonders there,
Only disclosed to microscopic eye.

Of old the Dryads near Edina's walls
Their mansions rear'd, and groves unnumber'd rose
Of branching oak, spread beech, and lofty pine;
Under whose shade, to shun the noontide blaze,
Did Pan resort, with all his rural train
Of shepherds and of nymphs. The Dryads, pleased,
Would hail their sports, and summon echo's voice
To send her greetings through the waving woods.
But the rude axe, long brandish'd by the hand
Of daring innovation, shaved the lawns;[1]

[1] [There is a tradition in Edinburgh that one of the King Jameses, in order to clear the forest, which in his time encumbered the ground to the south of Edinburgh, and which proved a retreat for banditti, gave the citizens permission to extend their houses seven feet forward into the street by means of wooden balconies, using the timber of that forest as the material. Of this tradition or fact, Fergusson here very neatly takes advantage.]

Then not a thicket or a copse remain'd
To sigh in concert with the breeze of eve.
Edina's mansions with lignarian art
Were piled and fronted. Like an ark she seem'd
To lie on mountain's top, with shapes replete,
Clean and unclean, that daily wander o'er
Her streets, that once were spacious, once were gay.
To Jove the Dryads pray'd, nor pray'd in vain,
For vengeance on her sons. At midnight drear
Black showers descend, and teeming myriads rise
Of bugs abhorrent, who by instinct steal
Through the putrescent and corrosive pores
Of sapless trees, that late in forest stood
With all the majesty of summer crown'd.
By Jove's command dispersed, they wander wide
O'er all the city. Some their cells prepare
'Mid the rich trappings and the gay attire
Of state luxuriant, and are fond to press
The waving canopy's depending folds;
While others, destined to an humbler fate,
Seek shelter in the dwellings of the poor,
Plying their nightly suction to the bed
Of toil'd mechanic, who, with folded arms,
Enjoys the comforts of a sleep so sound,
That not the alarming sting of glutting bug
To murderous deed can rouse his brawny arm
Upon the blood-swoln fiend, who basely steals
Life's genial current from his throbbing veins.
Happy were grandeur could she triumph here,
And banish from her halls each misery,
Which she must brook in common with the poor
Who beg subsistence from her sparing hands.
Then might the rich, to fell disease unknown,
Indulge in fond excess, nor ever feel
The slowly creeping hours of restless night,
When shook with guilty horrors. But the wind
Whose fretful gusts of anger shake the world,
Bears more destructive on the aspiring roofs
Of dome and palace, than on cottage low,
That meets Æolus with his gentler breath,
When safely shelter'd in the peaceful vale.
Is there a being breathes, howe'er so vile,
Too pitiful for envy?—she, with venom'd tooth
And grinning madness, frowns upon the bliss
Of every species; from the human form
That spurns the earth, and bends his mental eye
Through the profundity of space unknown,
Down to the crawling bug's detested race.
Thus the lover pines, that reptile rude
Should 'mid the lilies of fair Chloe's breast
Implant the deep carnation, and enjoy
Those sweets which angel modesty hath veil'd
From eyes profane. Yet murmur not, ye few
Who gladly would be bugs for Chloe's sake!
For soon, alas! the fluctuating gales
Of earthly joy invert the happy scene.
The breath of spring may, with her balmy power,
And warmth diffusing, give to nature's face
Her brightest colours; but how short the space,
Till angry Eurus, from his petrid cave,
Deform the year, and all these sweets annoy!
Even so befalls it to this creeping race,
This envied commonwealth. For they a while
On Chloe's bosom, alabaster fair,
May steal ambrosial bliss; or may regale
On the rich viands of luxurious blood,
Delighted and sufficed. But mark the end:
Lo! Whitsuntide appears with gloomy train
Of growing desolation. First upholsterer rude
Removes the waving drapery, where for years
A thriving colony of old and young
Had hid their numbers from the prying day.
Anon they fall, and gladly would retire
To safer ambush; but his ruthless foot,
Ah, cruel pressure! cracks their vital springs,
And with their deep-dyed scarlet smears the floor.
Sweet powers! has pity in the female breast
No tender residence, no loved abode,
To urge from murderous deed the avenging hand
Of angry housemaid? She'll have blood for blood!
For, lo! the boiling streams from copper tube,
Hot as her rage, sweep myriads to death.
Their carcasses are destined to the urn
Of some chaste Naïad, that gives birth to floods,
Whose fragrant virtues hail Edina, famed
For yellow limpid—whose chaste name the Muse
Deems too exalted to retail in song.
Ah me! No longer they at midnight shade,
With baneful sting, shall seek the downy couch
Of slumbering mortals. Nor shall love-sick swain,
When, by the bubbling brook, in fairy dream,
His nymph, but half reluctant to his wish,
Is gently folded in his eager arms,
E'er curse the shaft envenom'd that disturbs
His long-loved fancies. Nor shall hungry bard,
Whose strong imagination whetted keen,
Conveys him to the feast, be tantalised
With poisonous tortures, when the cup, brimful
Of purple vintage, gives him greater joy
Than all the Heliconian streams that play
And murmur round Parnassus. Now the wretch
Oft doom'd to restless days and sleepless nights,
By bugbear conscience thrall'd, enjoys an hour
Of undisturb'd repose. The miser, too,
May brook his golden dreams, nor wake with fear
That thieves or kindred (for no soul he'll trust)
Have broke upon his chest, and strive to steal
The shining idols of his useless hours.
Happy the bug, whose unambitious views
To gilded pomp ne'er tempt him to aspire!
Safely may he, enwrapt in russet fold
Of cobweb'd curtain, set at bay the fears
That still attendant are on bugs of state.
He never knows at morn the busy brush
Of scrubbing chambermaid. His coursing blood
Is ne'er obstructed with obnoxious dose
By Oliphant prepared; too poisonous drug!
As fatal to this hated crawling tribe
As ball and powder to the sons of war.

A SATURDAY'S EXPEDITION.

IN MOCK HEROICS.

At that sweet period of revolving time
When Phœbus lingers not in Thetis' lap;
When twinkling stars their feeble influence shed,
And scarcely glimmer through the ethereal vault,
Till sol again his near approach proclaims,
With ray purpureal, and the blushing form
Of fair Aurora, goddess of the dawn,
Leading the winged coursers to the pole
Of Phœbus' car. 'Twas in that season fair,
When jocund summer did the meads array
In Flora's ripening bloom, that we prepared
To break the bond of business, and to roam
Far from Edina's jarring noise a while.
Fair smiled the wakening morn on our design;
And we, with joy elate, our march began
For Leith's fair port, where oft Edina's sons
The week conclude, and in carousal quaff
Port, punch, rum, brandy, and Geneva strong,
Liquors too nervous for the feeble purse.
With all convenient speed we there arrived:
Nor had we time to touch at house or hall,
Till from the boat a hollow thundering voice
Bellow'd vociferous, and our ears assail'd
With "Ho! Kinghorn, ho! come straight aboard."
We fail'd not to obey the stern command,
Utter'd with voice as dreadful as the roar
Of Polyphemus, 'mid rebounding rocks,
When overcome by sage Ulysses' wiles.
"Hoist up your sails!" the angry skipper cries,
While fore and aft the busy sailors run,
And loose th' entangled cordage. O'er the deep
Zephyrus blows, and hugs our lofty sails,
Which, in obedience to the powerful breeze,
Swell o'er the foaming main, and kiss the wave.

Now o'er the convex surface of the flood
Precipitate we fly. Our foaming prow
Divides the saline stream. On either side
Ridges of yesty surge dilate apace;
But from the poop the waters gently flow,
And undulation for the time decays,
In eddies smoothly floating o'er the main.
Here let the Muse in doleful numbers sing
The woeful fate of those whose cruel stars
Have doom'd them subject to the languid powers
Of watery sickness. Though with stomach full
Of juicy beef, of mutton in its prime,
Or all the dainties luxury can boast,
They brave the elements—yet the rocking bark,
Truly regardless of their precious food,
Converts their visage to the ghastly pale,
And makes the sea partaker of the sweets
On which they sumptuous fared. And this the cause
Why those of Scotia's sons, whose wealthy store
Hath blest them with a splendid coach and six,
Rather incline to linger on the way,
And cross the river Forth by Stirling bridge,
Than be subjected to the ocean's swell,
To dangerous ferries, and to sickness dire.
And now at equal distance shows the land;—
Gladly the tars the joyful task pursue
Of gathering in the freight. Debates arise
From counterfeited halfpence. In the hold
The seamen scrutinise, and eager peep
Through every corner where their watchful eye
Suspects a lurking-place or dark retreat,
To hide the timid corpse of some poor soul
Whose scanty purse can scarce one groat afford.
At length we, cheerful, land on Fifan shore,
Where sickness vanishes, and all the ills
Attendant on the passage of Kinghorn.
Our pallid cheeks resume their rosy hue,
And empty stomachs keenly crave supply.
With eager step we reach'd the friendly inn;
Nor did we think of beating our retreat
Till every gnawing appetite was quell'd.
Eastward along the Fifan coast we stray:
And here th' unwearied eye may fondly gaze
O'er all the tufted groves and pointed spires
With which the pleasant banks of Forth are crown'd.
Sweet navigable stream! where commerce reigns,
Where peace and jocund plenty smile serene.
On thy green banks sits liberty enthroned:
But not that shadow which the English youth
So eagerly pursue; but freedom bought,
When Caledonia's triumphant sword
Taught the proud sons of Anglia to bemoan
Their fate at Bannockburn, where thousands came—
Never to tread their native soil again.
Far in a rugged den, where Nature's hand
Had careless strew'd the rocks, a dreadful cave,
Whose concave ceiling echoed to the floods
Their hollow murmurs on the trembling shore,
Demanded our approach. The yawning porch
Its massy sides disclosed, and o'er the top
The ivy tendrils twined the uncultured fern.
Fearful, we pry into the dreary vault,
Hoary with age, and breathing noxious damps.
Here screeching owls may unmolested dwell
In solitary gloom;—for few there are
Whose inclination leads them to review
A cell where putrid smells infectious reign.[1]
Then, turning westward, we our course pursue
Along the course of Fortha's briny flood,
Till we o'ertake the gradual rising dale
Where fair Burntisland rears her reverend dome:
And here the vulgar sign-post, painted o'er
With imitations vile of man and horse,
Of small-beer frothing o'er the unshapely jug,
With courteous invitation spoke us fair
To enter in, and taste what precious drops
Were there reserved to moisten strangers' throats,
Too often parch'd upon the tedious way.
After regaling here with sober can,
Our limbs we plied, and nimbly measured o'er
The hills, the vales, and the extensive plains,
Which form the distance from Burntisland's port
To Inverkeithing. Westward still we went,
Till in the ferry-boat we loll'd at ease:
Nor did we long on Neptune's empire float;
For scarce ten posting minutes were elaps'd
Till we again on *terra firma* stood,
And to M'Laren's march'd, where roasted lamb,
With cooling lettuce, crown'd our social board.
Here, too, the cheering glass, chief foe to care,
Went briskly round; and many a virgin fair
Received our homage in a bumper full.
Thus having sacrificed a jocund hour
To smiling mirth, we quit the happy scene,
And move progressive to Edina's walls.
Now still returning eve creep'd gradual on,
And the bright sun, as weary of the sky,
Beam'd forth a languid occidental ray,
Whose ruby-tinctur'd radiance faintly gleam'd
Upon the airy cliffs and distant spires
That float on the horizon's utmost verge.
So we, with festive joints and lingering pace,
Moved slowly on, and did not reach the town
Till Phœbus had unyoked his prancing steeds.
Ye sons of Caledonia! who delight,
With all the pomp and pageantry of state,
To roll along in gilded affluence;
For one poor moment wean your thoughts from these,
And list this humble strain. If you, like us,
Could brave the angry waters, be uproused
By the first salutation to the morn
Paid by the watchful cock; or be compell'd
On foot to wander o'er the lonely plain
For twenty tedious miles—then should the gout,
With all his racking pangs, forsake your frame;
For he delights not to traverse the field,
Or rugged steep, but prides him to recline
On the luxuriance of a velvet fold,
Where indolence on purple sofa lolls.

[1] A large cave at a small distance from Kinghorn, supposed, about a century ago, to have been the haunt of thieves.

THE CANONGATE PLAYHOUSE IN RUINS.[1]

A BURLESQUE POEM.

Ye few, whose feeling hearts are ne'er estranged
From soft emotions! ye who often wear
The eye of pity, and oft vent her sighs,
When sad Melpomene, in woe-fraught strains,
Gains entrance to the breast; or often smile
When brisker Thalia gaily trips along
Scenes of enlivening mirth—attend my song!
And fancy! thou whose ever-flaming light
Can penetrate into the dark abyss
Of chaos and of hell—oh! with thy blazing torch
The wasteful scene illumine, that the Muse
With daring pinions may her flight pursue,
Nor with timidity be known to soar
O'er the theatric world, to chaos changed.
Can I contemplate those deserted scenes
Of mouldering desolation, and forbid
The voice elegiac and the falling tear?
No more, from box to box, the basket piled
With oranges as radiant as the spheres,
Shall with their luscious virtues charm the sense
Of taste and smell. No more the gaudy beau,
With handkerchief in lavender well drench'd,
Or bergamot, or in rose-water pure,
With flavoriferous sweets shall chase away

[1] [The Canongate Theatre stood behind the south line of the street, opposite to the head of New Street. It was founded in August 1746 by Mr Lacy Ryan of Covent-Garden, and, when finished, could hold, at 2s. 6d., 1s. 6d., and 1s., about £70. It was first used under the royal licence on the 9th of December 1767; but a new theatre being built next year in the New Town, this humble place of entertainment was almost immediately after left to ruin. The site has long been occupied by a brewery.]

The pestilential fumes of vulgar cits,
Who, in impatience for the curtain's rise,
Amused the lingering moments, and applied
Thirst-quenching porter to their parched lips.
Alas, how sadly alter'd is the scene!
For, lo! those sacred walls, that late were brush'd
By rustling silks and waving capuchins,
Are now become the sport of wrinkled time!
Those walls, that late have echoed to the voice
Of stern king Richard, to the seat transform'd
Of crawling spiders and detested moths,
Who in the lonely crevices reside,
Or gender in the beams that have upheld
Gods, demi-gods, and all the joyous crew
Of thunderers in the galleries above.
Oh, Shakspeare! where are all thy tinsell'd kings,
Thy fawning courtiers, and thy waggish clowns?
Where all thy fairies, spirits, witches, fiends,
That here have gamboll'd in nocturnal sport
Round the lone oak, or sunk in fear away
From the shrill summons of the cock at morn?
Where now the temples, palaces, and towers?
Where now the groves that ever verdant smiled?
Where now the streams that never ceased to flow?
Where now the clouds, the rains, the hails, the winds,
The thunders, lightnings, and the tempests strong?
Here shepherds, lolling in their woven bowers,
In dull recitativo often sang
Their loves, accompanied with clangour strong
From horns, from trumpets, clarionets, bassoons;
From violinos sharp or droning bass,
Or the brisk tinkling of a harpsichord.
Such is thy power, oh music! such thy fame,
That it has fabled been, how foreign song,
Soft issuing from Tenducci's[1] slender throat,
Has drawn a plaudit from the gods enthroned
Round the empyreum of Jove himself,
High seated on Olympus' airy top.
Nay, that his feverous voice was known to soothe
The shrill-toned prating of the females' tongues,
Who, in obedience to the lifeless song,
All prostrate fell, all fainting died away
In silent ecstacies of passing joy.
Ye who oft wander by the silver light
Of sister Luna, to the churchyard's gloom,
Or cypress shades; if chance should guide your steps
To this sad mansion, think not that you tread
Unconsecrated paths; for on this ground
Have holy streams been pour'd and flowerets strew'd;
While many a kingly diadem, I ween,
Lies useless here entomb'd, with heaps of coin
Stamp'd in theatric mint—offenceless gold!
That carried not persuasion in its hue,
To tutor mankind in their evil ways.
After a lengthen'd series of years,
When the unhallow'd spade shall discompose
This mass of earth, then relics shall be found,
Which, or for gems of worth, or Roman coins,
Well may obtrude on antiquary's eye.
Ye spouting blades! regard this ruin'd fane,
And nightly come within those naked walls
To shed the tragic tear. Full many a drop
Of precious inspiration have you suck'd
From its dramatic sources. Oh! look here
Upon this roofless and forsaken pile,
And stalk in pensive sorrow o'er the ground
Where you've beheld so many noble scenes.
Thus, when the mariner to foreign clime
His bark conveys, where odoriferous gales,
And orange groves, and love-inspiring wine,
Have oft repaid his toil—if earthquake dire,
With hollow groanings and convulsive pangs,
The ground hath rent, and all those beauties foil'd,
Will he refrain to shed the grateful drop,
A tribute justly due (though seldom paid)
To the blest memory of happier times?

[1] [Tenducci was an opera singer of repute. He often visited Edinburgh, where his mellifluous way of singing the Scottish melodies made him a great favourite.]

FASHION.

Bred up where discipline most rare is,
In military garden, Paris.—*Hudibras.*

Oh nature, parent goddess! at thy shrine,
Prone to the earth, the Muse, in humble song,
Thy aid implores; nor will she wing her flight,
Till thou, bright form! in thy effulgence pure,
Deign'st to look down upon her low state,
And shed thy powerful influence benign.
Come, then, regardless of vain fashion's fools;
Of all those vile enormities of shape
That crowd the world; and with thee bring
Wisdom, in sober contemplation clad,
To lash those bold usurpers from the stage.
On that gay spot, where the Parisian dome
To fools the stealing hand of time displays,
Fashion her empire holds—a goddess great!
View her, amidst the *millinerian* train,
On a resplendant throne exalted high,
Strangely diversified with gewgaw forms;
Her busy hand glides pleasurably o'er
The darling novelties, the trinkets rare,
That greet the sight of the admiring dames,
Whose dear-bought treasures o'er their native isle
Contagious spread, infect the wholesome air
That cherish'd vigour in Britannia's sons.
Near this proud seat of fashion's antic form
A sphere revolves, on whose bright orb behold
The circulating mode of changeful dress,
Which, like the image of the sun himself,
Glories in coursing through the diverse signs
Which blazon in the zodiac of heaven.
Around her throne coquettes and petits beaux
Unnumber'd shine, and with each other vie
In nameless ornaments and gaudy plumes.
Oh worthy emulation! to excel
In trifles such as these, how truly great!
Unworthy of the peevish blubbering boy,
Crush'd in his childhood by the fondling nurse,
Who for some favourite bauble frets and pines.
Amongst the proud attendants of this shrine,
The wealthy, young, and gay Clarinda draws
From poorer objects the astonish'd eye.
Her looks, her dress, and her affected mien,
Speak her enthusiast keen in fashion's train.
White as the cover'd Alps, or wintry face
Of snowy Lapland, her tupée uprear'd,
Exhibits to the view a cumbrous mass
Of curls high nodding o'er her polish'd brow;
From which redundant flows the Brussels lace,
With pendant ribbons, too, of various dye,
Where all the colours in the ethereal bow
Unite and blend, and tantalise the sight.
Nature! to thee alone, not fashion's pomp,
Does beauty owe her all-commanding eye.
From the green bosom of the watery main,
Array'd by thee, majestic Venus rose,
With waving ringlets carelessly diffused,
Floating luxurious o'er the restless surge.
What Rubens, then, with his enlivening hand,
Could paint the bright vermilion of her cheek,
Pure as the roseate portal of the east,
That opens to receive the cheering ray
Of Phœbus beaming from the orient sky?
For sterling beauty needs no faint essays
Or colourings of art to gild her more—
She is all-perfect. And if beauty fail,
Where are those ornaments, those rich attires,
Which can reflect a lustre on that face,
Where she with light innate disdains to shine?
Britons! beware of fashion's luring wiles.
On either hand, chief guardians of her power,
And sole dictators of her fickle voice,
Folly and dull effeminacy reign;
Whose blackest magic and unhallow'd spells
The Roman ardour check'd; their strength decay'd;
And all their glory scatter'd to the winds.
Tremble, oh Albion! for the voice of fate
Seems ready to decree thy speedy fall.

By pride, by luxury, what fatal ills,
Unheeded, have approach'd thy mortal frame!
How many foreign weeds their heads have rear'd
In thy fair garden! Hasten, ere their strength
And baneful vegetation taint the soil,
To root out rank disease, which soon must spread,
If no blest antidote will purge away
Fashion's proud minions from our sea-girt isle.

A BURLESQUE ELEGY,

ON THE AMPUTATION OF A STUDENT'S HAIR, BEFORE HIS ORDERS.

Oh sad catastrophe! event most dire!
How shall the loss, the heavy loss, be borne?
Or how the muse attune the plaintive lyre,
To sing of Strephon with his ringlets shorn?

Say, ye who can divine the mighty cause
From whence this modern circumcision springs,
Why such oppressive and such rigid laws
Are still attendant on religous things?

Alas, poor Strephon! to the stern decree
Which prunes your tresses, are you doom'd to yield?
Soon shall your *caput*, like the blasted tree,
Diffuse its faded honours o'er the field.

Now let the solemn sounds of mourning swell,
And wake sad echoes to prolong the lay;
For, hark! methinks I hear the tragic knell;
This hour bespeaks the barber on his way.

Oh razor! yet thy poignant edge suspend;
Oh yet indulge me with a short delay;
Till I once more pourtray my youthful friend,
Ere his proud locks are scatter'd on the clay;

Ere the huge wig, in formal curls array'd,
With pulvil pregnant, shall o'ershade his face;
Or, like the wide umbrella, lend its aid
To banish lustre from the sacred place.

Mourn, oh ye zephyrs! for, alas! no more
His waving ringlets shall your call obey!
For, ah! the stubborn wig must now be wore,
Since Strephon's locks are scatter'd on the clay.

Amanda, too, in bitter anguish sighs,
And grieves the metamorphosis to see.
Mourn not, Amanda, for the hair that lies
Dead on the ground shall be revived for thee.

Some skilful artist of a French frizeur,
With graceful ringlets shall thy temples bind,
And cull the precious relics from the floor,
Which yet may flutter in the wanton wind.

VERSES

WRITTEN AT THE HERMITAGE OF BRAID, NEAR EDINBURGH.

Would you relish a rural retreat,
Or the pleasure the groves can inspire,
The city's allurements forget?
To this spot of enchantment retire;

Where a valley and crystalline brook,
Whose current glides sweetly along,
Give nature a fanciful look,
The beautiful woodlands among.

Behold the umbrageous trees
A covert of verdure have spread,
Where shepherds may loll at their ease,
And pipe to the musical shade.

For, lo! through each opening is heard,
In concert with waters below,
The voice of a musical bird,
Whose numbers melodiously flow.

The bushes and arbours so green,
The tendrils of spray interwove,
With foliage shelter the scene,
And form a retirement for love.

Here Venus transported may rove
From pleasure to pleasure unseen,
Nor wish for the Cyprian grove
Her youthful Adonis to screen.

Oft let me contemplative dwell
On a scene where such beauties appear;
I could live in a cot or a cell,
And never think solitude near.

A TALE.

Those rigid pedagogues and fools,
Who walk by self-invented rules,
Do often try, with empty head,
The emptier mortals to mislead,
And fain would urge that none but they
Could rightly teach the A, B, C;
On which they've got an endless comment,
To trifling minds of mighty moment,
Throwing such barriers in the way
Of those who genius display,
As often, ah! too often, tease
Them out of patience and of fees,
Before they're able to explode
Obstructions thrown on learning's road.
May mankind all employ their tools
To banish pedantry from schools!
And may each pedagogue avail,
By listening to this simple tale!

Wise Mr Birch had long intended
The alphabet should be amended,
And taught that H a breathing was;
Ergo, he saw no proper cause
Why such a letter should exist:
Thus in a breath was he dismiss'd,
With, "Oh beware, beware, oh youth!
Take not the villain in your mouth."

One day this alphabetic sinner
Was eager to devour his dinner,
When to appease the craving glutton,
His boy Tom produced the mutton.
Was such disaster ever told?
Alas, the meat was deadly cold!
"Here take and h—eat it," says the master;
Quoth Tom, "That shall be done, and fast, sir."
And few there are who will dispute it,
But he went instantly about it;
For Birch had scorn'd the H to say,
And blew him with a puff away.

The bell was rung with dread alarm—
"Bring me the mutton—Is it warm?"
"Sir, you desired, and I have eat it."
"You lie; my orders were to heat it."
Quoth Tom, "I'll readily allow
That H is but a breathing now."

THE PEASANT, THE HEN, AND YOUNG DUCKS.

A FABLE.

A hen, of all the dunghill crew
The fairest, stateliest to view,
Of laying tired, she fondly begs
Her keeper's leave to hatch her eggs.
He, dunn'd with the incessant cry,
Was forced for peace' sake to comply;
And in a month, the downy brood
Came chirping round the hen for food,
Who view'd them with parental eyes
Of pleasing fondness and surprise,
And was not at a loss to trace
Her likeness growing in their face;
Though the broad bills could well declare
That they another's offspring were:
So strong will prejudices blind,
And lead astray the easy mind.

To the green margin of the brook
The hen her fancied children took:
Each young one shakes his unfledged wings,
And to the flood by instinct springs;
With willing strokes they gladly swim,
Or dive into the glassy stream,
While the fond mother vents her grief,
And prays the peasant's kind relief.
The peasant heard the bitter cries,
And thus in terms of rage replies:
"You fool! give o'er your useless moan,
Nor mourn misfortunes not your own;
But learn in wisdom to forsake
The offspring of the duck and drake."
To whom the hen, with angry crest
And scornful look, herself address'd:
"If reason were my constant guide
(Of man the ornament and pride),
Then should I boast a cruel heart,
That feels not for another's smart:
But since poor I, by instinct blind,
Can boast no feelings so refined,
'Tis hoped your reason will excuse,
Though I your counsel sage refuse,
And from the perils of the flood
Attempt to save another's brood."

MORAL.

When Pity, generous nymph! possess'd,
And moved at will the human breast,
No tongue its distant sufferings told,
But she assisted, she condoled,
And willing bore her tender part
In all the feelings of the heart:
But now from her our hearts decoy'd,
To sense of others' woes destroy'd,
Act only from a selfish view,
Nor give the aid to pity due.

SONG.

Where winding Forth adorns the vale,
Fond Strephon, once a shepherd gay,
Did to the rocks his lot bewail,
And thus address'd his plaintive lay:
"Oh, Julia! more than lily fair,
More blooming than the budding rose,
How can thy breast, relentless, bear
A heart more cold than winter's snows?

Yet nipping winter's keenest sway
But for a short-lived space prevails;
Spring soon returns, and cheers each spray,
Scented with Flora's fragrant gales.
Come, Julia! come; thy love obey,
Thou mistress of angelic charms!
Come, smiling like the morn in May,
And bless thy Strephon's longing arms.

Else, haunted by the fiend despair,
He'll court some solitary grove,
Where mortal foot did ne'er repair,
But swains oppress'd by hapless love.
From the once pleasing rural throng
Removed, he'll through the desert stray,
Where Philomela's mournful song
Shall join his melancholy lay."

SONG.

Amidst a rosy bank of flowers,
Damon, forlorn, deplored his fate;
In sighs he spent his languid hours,
And breathed his woes in doleful state.

No more shall gaiety cheer his mind;
No wanton sports can soothe his care;
Since sweet Amanda proved unkind,
And left him full of black despair.

His looks, that were as fresh as morn,
Can now no longer smiles impart;
His pensive soul, on sadness borne,
Is rack'd and torn by Cupid's dart.

Turn, fair Amanda! cheer your swain;
Unshroud him, from his veil of woe:
Turn, gentle nymph! and ease the pain
That in his tortured breast doth grow.

EXTEMPORE,

ON BEING ASKED WHICH OF THREE SISTERS WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL.

When Paris gave his voice, in Ida's grove,
For the resistless Venus, queen of love,
'Twas no great task to pass a judgment there,
Where she alone was exquisitely fair:
But here, what could his ablest judgment teach,
When wisdom, power, and beauty, reign in each?
The youth, nonplus'd, behoved to join with me,
And wish the apple had been cut in three.

ON SEEING A LADY PAINT HERSELF.

When by some misadventure cross'd,
The banker hath his fortune lost,
Credit his instant need supplies,
And for a moment blinds our eyes:
So, Delia, when her beauty's flown,
Trades on a bottom not her own,
And labours to escape detection,
By putting on a false complexion.

EXTEMPORE,

ON SEEING STANZAS ADDRESSED TO MRS HARTLEY, COMEDIAN, WHEREIN SHE IS DESCRIBED AS RESEMBLING MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

Hartley resembles Scotland's queen,
Some bard enraptured cries;
A flattering bard he is, I ween,
Or else the painter lies.

ON THE DEATH OF

MR THOMAS LANCASHIRE, COMEDIAN.[1]

Alas, poor Tom! how oft with merry heart
Have we beheld thee play the sexton's part!
Each comic heart must now be grieved to see
The sexton's dreary part perform'd on thee.

TO THE MEMORY OF

JOHN CUNNINGHAM THE POET.

Sing his praises that doth keep
Our flocks from harm,
Pan, the father of our sheep;
And, arm in arm,
Tread we softly in a round,
While the hollow neighbouring ground
Fills the music with her sound.
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

Ye mournful meanders and groves,
Delight of the Muse and her song!
Ye grottoes and dripping alcoves,
No strangers to Corydon's tongue!

Let each Sylvan and Dryad declare
His themes and his music how dear;
Their plaints and their dirges prepare,
Attendant on Corydon's bier.

[1] ["Mr Lancashire possessed a great fund of dry humour, and filled Shuter's line in low comedy. He was a great favourite with the public. He kept a tavern, first in the Canongate, and afterwards in the New Town. He drank and joked with his customers; laughed and grew fat; and at length died, respected by many, and with the good word of all."—*Jackson's History of the Scottish Stage*, 42.]

The echo that join'd in the lay,
So amorous, sprightly, and free,
Shall send forth the sounds of dismay,
And sigh with sad pity for thee.

Wild wander his flocks with the breeze,
His reed can no longer control;
His numbers no longer can please,
Or send kind relief to the soul.

But long may they wander and bleat;
To hills tell the tale of their woe;
The woodlands the tale shall repeat,
And the waters shall mournfully flow.

For these were the haunts of his love,
The sacred retreats of his ease,
Where favourite fancy would rove,
As wanton, as light as the breeze.

Her zone will discolour'd appear,
With fanciful ringlets unbound;
A face pale and languid she'll wear,
A heart fraught with sorrow profound.

The reed of each shepherd will mourn;
The shades of Parnassus decay;
The Muses will dry their sad urn,
Since reft of young Corydon's lay.

To him every passion was known
That throbb'd in the breast with desire;
Each gentle affection was shown
In the soft sighing songs of his lyre.

Like the carolling thrush on the spray
In music soft warbling and wild,
To love was devoted each lay,
In accents pathetic and mild.

Let beauty and virtue revere,
And the songs of the shepherd approve,
Who felt, who lamented the snare,
When repining at pitiless love.

The summer but languidly gleams;
Pomona no comfort can bring;
Nor valleys, nor grottoes, nor streams,
Nor the May-born flowerets of spring.

They've fled all with Corydon's muse,
For his brows to form chaplets of woe;
Whose reed oft awaken'd their boughs,
As the whispering breezes that blow.

To many a fanciful spring
His lyre was melodiously strung;
While fairies and fawns, in a ring,
Have applauded the swain as he sung.

To the cheerful he usher'd his smiles;
To the woeful his sigh and his tear;
A condoler with want and her toils,
When the voice of oppression was near.

Though titles and wealth were his due;
Though fortune denied his reward;
Yet truth and sincerity knew
What the goddess would never regard.

Avails aught the generous heart,
Which nature to goodness design'd,
If fortune denies to impart
Her kindly relief to the mind?

'Twas but faint the relief to dismay,
The cells of the wretched among;
Though sympathy sang in the lay,
Though melody fell from his tongue.

Let the favour'd of fortune attend
To the ails of the wretched and poor:
Though Corydon's lays could befriend,
'Tis riches alone that can cure.

But they to compassion are dumb;
To pity, their voices unknown;
Near sorrow they never can come,
Till misfortune has mark'd them her own.

Now the shades of the evening depend;
Each warbler is lull'd on the spray;
The cypress doth ruefully bend
Where reposes the shepherd's cold clay.

Adieu, then, the songs of the swain!
Let peace still attend on his shade;
And his pipe, that is dumb to his strain,
In the grave be with Corydon laid.

THE DELIGHTS OF VIRTUE.

Returning morn, in orient blush array'd,
With gentle radiance hail'd the sky serene;
No rustling breezes waved the verdant shade;
No swelling surge disturb'd the azure main.

These moments, meditation! sure are thine;
These are the halcyon joys you wish to find,
When nature's peaceful elements combine
To suit the calm composure of the mind.

The Muse, exalted by thy sacred power,
To the green mountain's airy summit flew,
Charm'd with the thoughtful stillness of an hour,
That usher'd beaming fancy to her view.

Fresh from old Neptune's fluid mansion sprung
The sun, reviver of each drooping flower;
At his approach, the lark, with matin song,
In notes of gratitude confess'd his power.

So shines fair Virtue, shedding light divine
On those who wish to profit by her ways;
Who ne'er at parting with their vice repine,
To taste the comforts of her blissful rays.

She with fresh hopes each sorrow can beguile;
Can dissipate adversity's deep gloom;
Make meagre poverty contented smile;
And the sad wretch forget his hapless doom.

Sweeter than shady groves in summer's pride,
Than flowery dales or grassy meads, is she;
Delightful as the honied streams that glide
From the rich labours of the busy bee.

Her paths and alleys are for ever green:—
There innocence, in snowy robes array'd,
With smiles of pure content, is hail'd the queen
And happy mistress of the sacred shade.

Oh let no transient gleam of earthly joy
From virtue lure your labouring steps aside;
Nor instant grandeur future hopes annoy
With thoughts that spring from insolence and pride.

Soon will the winged moments speed away,
When you'll no more the plumes of honour wear:
Grandeur must shudder at the sad decay,
And pride look humble when he ponders there.

Deprived of virtue, where is beauty's power?
Her dimpled smiles, her roses, charm no more;
So much can guilt the loveliest form deflower,
We loathe that beauty which we loved before.

How fair are virtue's buds, where'er they blow,
Or in the desert wild or garden gay!
Her flowers how sacred, wheresoe'er they show,
Unknown to killing canker and decay!

A TAVERN ELEGY.

Fled are the moments of delusive mirth,
The fancied pleasure, paradise divine!
Hush'd are the clamours that derive their birth
From generous floods of soul-reviving wine.

Still night and silence now succeed their noise;
The erring tides of passion rage no more;
But all is peaceful as the ocean's voice
When breezeless waters kiss the silent shore.

Here stood the juice, whose care-controlling powers
Could every human misery subdue,
And wake to sportive joy the lazy hours,
That to the languid senses hateful grew.

Attracted by the magic of the bowl,
Around the swelling brim in full array
The glasses circled, as the planets roll,
And hail with borrow'd light the god of day.

Here music, the delight of moments gay,
Bade the unguarded tongues their motions cease,
And with a mirthful, a melodious lay,
Awed the fell voice of discord into peace.

These are the joys that virtue must approve,
While reason shines with majesty divine,
Ere our ideas in disorder move,
And sad excess against the soul combine.

What evils have not phrensied mortals done
By wine, that *ignis fatuus* of the mind!
How many by its force to vice are won,
Since first ordain'd to tantalise mankind!

By Bacchus' power, ye sons of riot! say,
How many watchful sentinels have bled!
How many travellers have lost their way,
By lamps unguided through the evening shade!

Oh spare those friendly twinklers of the night!
Let no rude cane their hallow'd orbs assail!
For cowardice alone condemns the light
That shows her countenance aghast and pale.

Now the short taper warns me to depart,
Ere darkness shall assume his dreary sway;
Ere solitude fall heavy on my heart,
That lingers for the far approach of day.

Who would not welcome the less dreaded doom,
To be for ever number'd with the dead,
Rather than bear the miserable gloom,
When all his comforts, all his friends, are fled?

Bear me, ye gods! where I may calmly rest
From all the follies of the night secure,
The balmy blessings of repose to taste,
Nor hear the tongue of outrage at my door.

GOOD EATING.

Hear, oh ye host of Epicurus! hear!—
Each portly form, whose overhanging paunch
Can well denote the all-transcendant joy
That springs unbounded from fruition full
Of rich repast—to you I consecrate
The song adventurous; happy if the Muse
Can cook the numbers to your palates keen,
Or send but half the relish with her song,
That smoking sirloins to your souls convey.
Hence now, ye starvelings wan! whose empty sides
Oft echo to the hollow-murmuring tones
Of hunger fell. Avaunt, ye base-born hinds!
Whose fates unkind ne'er destined you to gorge
The banquet rare, or wage a pleasing war
With the delicious morsels of the earth.
To you I sing not—for, alas! what pain,
What tantalising tortures would ensue,
To aid the force of famine's sharpest tooth,
Were I to breathe my accents in your ear!
Hail, roast beef! monarch of the festive throng,
To hunger's bane the strongest antidote;
Come, and with all thy rage-appeasing sweets
Our appetites allay! For, or attended
By root Hibernian, or plum-pudding rare,
Still thou art welcome to the social board.
Say, can the spicy gales from orient blown,
Or zephyr's wing, that from the orange groves
Brushes the breeze with rich perfumes replete,
More aromatic or reviving smell
To nostrils bring! Or can the glassy streams
Of Pactolus, that o'er his golden sands
Delightful glide, the luscious drops outvie
That from thy sides embrown'd unnumber'd fall!
Behold, at thy approach, what smiles serene
Beam from the ravish'd guests! Still are their tongues,
While they, with whetted instruments, prepare
For deep incision. Now the abscess bleeds,
And the devouring band, with stomachs keen,
And glutting rage, thy beauteous form destroy;
Leave you a skeleton marrowless and bare,
A prey to dunghills, or vexatious sport
Of torrent rushing from defilement's urns,
That o'er the city's flinty pavement hurls.
So fares it with the man whose powerful pelf
Once could command respect. Caress'd by all,
His bounties were as lavish as the hand
Of yellow Ceres, till his stores decay'd;
And then (oh dismal tale!) those precious drops
Of flattery that bedew'd his spring of fortune,
Leave the sad winter of his state so fallen,
Nor nurse the thorn from which they ne'er can hope
Again to pluck the odour-dropping rose!
For thee, roast beef! in variegated shapes,
Have mortals toil'd. The sailor sternly braves
The strength of Boreas, and exulting stands
Upon the sea-wash'd deck. With hopes inspired
Of yet indulging in thy wish'd-for sweets,
He smiles amidst the dangers that surround him;
Cheerful he steers to cold forbidden climes,
Or to the torrid zone explores his way.
Be kind, ye powers! and still propitious send
This paragon of feeding to our halls.
With this regaled, who would, vain-glorious, wish
For towering pyramids superbly crown'd
With jellies, syllabubs, or ice-creams rare?
These can amuse the eye, and may bestow
A short-lived pleasure to a palate strange;
But for a moment's pleasure, who would vend
A lifetime that would else be spent in joy,
For hateful loathings, and for gouty rheums,
Ever preceded by indulged excess?
Blest be those walls where hospitality
And welcome reign at large! There may you oft
Of social cheer partake, and love, and joy;
Pleasures that to the human mind convey
Ideal pictures of the bliss supreme:
But near the gate where parsimony dwells,
Where ceremony cool, with brow austere,
Confronts the guests, ne'er let thy foot approach!
Deprived of thee, heaven-born benevolence!
What is life's garden but a devious wild,
Through which the traveller must pass forlorn,
Unguided by the aid of friendship's ray?
Rather, if poverty hold converse with thee,
To the lone garret's lofty bield ascend,
Or dive to some sad cell—there have recourse
To meagre offals, where, though small thy fare,
Freedom shall wing thee to a purer joy
Than banquets with superfluous dainties crown'd,
Mix'd with reserve and coolness, can afford.
But if your better fortunes have prepared
Your purse with ducats, and with health your frame,
Assemble, friends! and to the tavern straight,
Where the officious drawer, bending low,
Is passive to a fault. Then, nor the signior grand,
Nor Russia's empress, signalised for war,
Can govern with more arbitrary sway.
Ye who, for health, for exercise, for air,
Oft saunter from Edina's smoke-capt spires,
And by the grassy hill or dimpled brook,
An appetite revive, should often stray
O'er Arthur-Seat's green pastures, to the town
For sheep-heads and bone-bridges famed of yore,
That in our country's annals stands yclept
Fair Duddingstonia, where you may be blest
With simple fare and vegetable sweets,
Freed from the clamours of the busy world.[1]
Or if for recreation you should stray
To Leithian shore, and breathe the keener air
Wafted from Neptune's empire of the main;

[1] [The village of Duddingstone, near Edinburgh, was famed for taverns in which sheep-head dinners could be got. The crania of the sheep being afterwards placed as stepping-stones across pools in the street, the place was quizzically spoken of as a great city possessing a hundred bone bridges!]

If appetite invite, and cash prevail,
Ply not your joints upon the homeward track,
Till Lawson, chiefest of the Scottish hosts,[1]
To nimble-footed waiters give command
The cloth to lay. Instinctively they come;
And, lo! the table, wrapt in cloudy steams,
Groans with the weight of the transporting fare,
That breathes frankincense on the guests around.
Now, while stern winter holds his frigid sway,
And to a period spins the closing year;
While festivals abound, and sportive hours
Kill the remembrance of our waning time,
Let not intemperance, destructive fiend!
Gain entrance to your halls. Despoil'd by him,
Shall cloyed appetite, forerunner sad
Of rank disease, inveterate clasp your frame:
Contentment shall no more be known to spread
Her cherub wings round thy once happy dwelling,
But misery of thought, and racking pain,
Shall plunge you headlong to the dark abyss.

TEA.

Ye maidens modest! on whose sullen brows
Hath weaning chastity her wrinkles cull'd;
Who constant labour o'er consumptive oil,
At midnight knell, to wash sleep's nightly balm
From closing eyelids, with the grateful drops
Of tea's blest juices—list the obsequious lays,
That come not, with Parnassian honours crown'd,
To dwell in murmurs o'er your sleepy sense;
But, fresh from orient blown, to chase far off
Your lethargy, that dormant needles roused
May pierce the waving mantua's silken folds.
For many a dame, in chamber sadly pent,
Hath this reviving liquor call'd to life:
And well it did, to mitigate the frowns
Of anger, reddening on Lucinda's brow
With flash malignant, that had harbour'd there,
If she at masquerade, or play, or ball,
Appear'd not in her newest, best attire.
But Venus, goddess of the eternal smile,
Knowing that stormy brows but ill become
Fair patterns of her beauty, hath ordain'd
Celestial tea—a fountain that can cure
The ills of passion, and can free from frowns,
And sobs, and sighs, the disappointed fair.
To her, ye fair! in adoration bow;
Whether at blushing morn or dewy eve
Her smoking cordials greet your fragrant board,
With Hyson, or Bohea, or Congou crown'd.
At midnight skies, ye mantua-makers! hail
The sacred offering: for the haughty belles
No longer can upbraid your lingering hands,
With trains upborne aloft by dusty gales
That sweep the ball-room. Swift they glide along,
And, with their sailing streamers, catch the eye
Of some Adonis, mark'd to love a prey;
Whose bosom ne'er had panted with a sigh,
But for the silken draperies that enclose
Graces from fancy's eye but ill conceal'd.
Mark well the fair! observe their modest eye,
With all the innocence of beauty blest;
Could slander o'er that tongue its power retain
Whose breath is music? Ah, fallacious thought!
The surface is ambrosia's mingled sweets,
But all below is death. At tea-board met,
Attend their prattling tongues; they scoff, they rail
Unbounded; but their darts are chiefly aim'd
At some gay fair, whose beauties far eclipse
Her dim beholders, who, with haggard eyes,
Would blight those charms where raptures long have dwelt
In ecstacy, delighted and sufficed.
In vain hath beauty, with her varied robe,
Bestow'd her glowing blushes o'er her cheeks,
And called attendant graces to her aid,
To blend the scarlet and the lily fair:
In vain did Venus in her favourite mould
Adapt the slender form to Cupid's choice;
When slander comes, her blasts too fatal prove;
Pale are those cheeks where youth and beauty glow'd—
Where smiles, where freshness, and where roses grew;
Ghastly and wan their Gorgon picture comes,
With every fury grinning from the looks
Of frightful monster. Envy's hissing tongue
With deepest vengeance wounds, and every wound
With deeper canker, deeper poison teems.
Oh gold! thy luring lustre first prevail'd
On man to tempt the fretful winds and waves,
And hunt new fancies. Still, thy glaring form
Bids commerce thrive, and o'er the Indian waves,
O'er-stemming danger, draw the labouring keel
From China's coast to Britain's colder clime,
Fraught with the fruits and herbage of her vales.
In them, whatever vegetable springs,
How loathsome and corrupted, triumphs here,
The bane of life, of health the sure decay:
Yet, yet we swallow, and extol the draught,
Though nervous ails should spring, and vapourish qualms
Our senses and our appetites destroy.
Look round, ye sippers of the poison'd cup
From foreign plant distill'd! No more repine
That nature, sparing of her sacred sweets,
Hath doom'd you in a wilderness to dwell;
While round Britannia's streams she kindly rears
Green sage and wild thyme. These were sure decreed,
As plants of Britain, to regale her sons
With native moisture, more refreshing, sweet,
And more profuse of health and vigour's balm,
Than all the stems that India can boast.

[1] [Lawson's tavern was in a large old house (dated 1678), on the *Shore* at Leith, very near the flag-house at the end of the pier. It has long been a private dwelling. Chancing to be in this house a good many years ago, the writer of this note observed on a window, scribbled by a diamond, the complaint of some dissatisfied customer, who had perhaps dined in it the most part of a century ago—"Lawson's is a good house, but bad waiters."]

THE SOW OF FEELING.

Well! I protest there's no such thing as dealing
With these starch'd poets—with these men of feeling!
Epilogue to the Prince of Tunis.

Malignant planets! do ye still combine
Against this wayward, dreary life of mine?
Has pitiless oppression—cruel case!—
Gain'd sole possession of the human race!
By cruel hands has every virtue bled,
And innocence from men to vultures fled?
Thrice happy had I lived in Jewish time,
When swallowing pork or pig was deem'd a crime;
My husband long had blest my longing arms,
Long, long had known love's sympathetic charms!
My children, too—a little suckling race,
With all their father growing in their face—
From their prolific dam had ne'er been torn,
Nor to the bloody stalls of butchers borne.
Ah, luxury! to you my being owes
Its load of misery, its load of woes!
With heavy heart I saunter all the day;
Gruntle and murmur all my hours away!
In vain I try to summon old desire
For favourite sports—for wallowing in the mire;
Thoughts of my husband, of my children, slain,
Turn all my wonted pleasure into pain!
How oft did we, in Phœbus' warming ray,
Bask on the humid softness of the clay!
Oft did his lusty head defend my tail
From the rude whispers of the angry gale;
While nose-refreshing puddles stream'd around,
And floating odours hail'd the dung-clad ground.
Near by a rustic mill's enchanting clack,
Where plenteous bushels load the peasant's back,

In straw-crown'd hovel, there to life we came,
One boar our father, and one sow our dam.
While tender infants on our mother's breast,
A flame divine in either shone confest:
In riper hours, love's more than ardent blaze
Enkindled all his passion, all his praise!
No deadly, sinful passion fired his soul—
Virtue o'er all his actions gain'd control!
That cherub which attracts the female heart,
And makes them soonest with their beauty part,
Attracted mine; I gave him all my love,
In the recesses of a verdant grove:
'Twas there I listen'd to his warmest vows,
Amidst the pendant melancholy boughs;
'Twas there my trusty lover shook for me
A shower of acorns from the oaken tree;
And from the teeming earth, with joy, plough'd out
The roots salubrious with his hardy snout.
But, happiness! a floating meteor thou,
That still inconstant art to man and sow,
Left'st us in gloomiest horrors to reside,
Near by the deep-dyed sanguinary tide,
Where whetting steel prepares the butchering knives,
With greater ease to take the harmless lives
Of cows, and calves, and sheep, and hogs, who fear
The bite of bull-dogs, that incessant tear
Their flesh, and keenly suck the blood-distilling ear!
At length the day, the eventful day, drew near,
Detested cause of many a briny tear!
I'll weep, till sorrow shall my eyelids drain,
A tender husband and a brother slain!
Alas! the lovely languor of his eye,
When the base murderers bore him captive by;
His mournful voice, the music of his groans,
Had melted any hearts, but hearts of stones!
Oh! had some angel at that instant come,
Given me four nimble fingers and a thumb,
The blood-stain'd blade I'd turn'd upon his foe,
And sudden sent him to the shades below—
Where, or Pythagoras' opinion jests,
Beasts are made butchers—butchers changed to beasts.
Wisely in early times the law decreed,
For human food few quadrupeds should bleed;
But monstrous man, still erring from the laws,
The curse of Heaven upon his banquet draws!
Already has he drain'd the marshes dry
For frogs, new victims of his luxury;
And soon the toad and lizard may come home,
In his voracious paunch to find a tomb;
Cats, rats, and mice, their destiny may mourn,
In time their carcasses on spits may turn;
They may rejoice to-day—while I resign
Life, to be number'd 'mongst the feeling swine.

AN EXPEDITION TO FIFE AND THE ISLAND OF MAY,

ON BOARD THE BLESSED ENDEAVOUR OF DUNBAR, CAPTAIN ROXBURGH COMMANDER.

List, oh ye slumberers on the peaceful shore,
Whose lives are one unvariegated calm
Of stillness and of sloth! And hear, oh nymph!
In heaven yclept pleasure; from your throne
Effulgent send a heavenly radiant beam,
That, cheer'd by thee, the Muse may bend her way:
For from no earthly flight she builds her song,
But from the bosom of green Neptune's main
Would fain emerge, and, under Phœbe's reign,
Transmit her numbers to inclining ears.
Now, when the warbling songsters quit the groves,
And solemn sounding whisperings lull the spray,
To meditation sacred, let me roam
O'er the blest floods that wash our natal shore,
And view the wonders of the deep profound,
While now the western breezes reign around,
And Boreas, sleeping in his iron cave,
Regains his strength and animated rage,
To wake new tempests and inswell new seas.
And now Favonius wings the sprightly gale;
The willing canvass, swelling with the breeze,
Gives life and motion to our bounding prow,
While the hoarse boatswain's pipe shrill-sounding far,
Calls all the tars to action. Hardy sons!
Who shudder not at life-devouring gales,
But smile amidst the tempest's sounding jars,
Or 'midst the hollow thunders of the war.
Fresh sprung from Greenland's cold, they hail with joy
The happier clime, the fresh autumnal breeze,
By Sirius guided, to allay the heat
That else would parch the vigour of their veins.
Hard change, alas! from petrifying cold
Instant to plunge to the severest ray
That burning dog-star or bright Phœbus sheds.
Like comet whirling through the ethereal void,
Now they are redden'd with the solar blaze,
Now froze and tortur'd by the frigid zone.
Thrice happy Britons! whose well-temper'd clay
Can face all climes, all tempests, and all seas.
These are the sons that check the growing war;
These are the sons that hem Britannia round
From sudden innovation—awe the shores,
And make their drooping pendants hail her queen
And mistress of the globe. They guard our beds,
While fearless we enjoy secure repose,
And all the blessings of a bounteous sky.
To them in feverous adoration bend,
Ye fashion'd macaronies! whose bright blades
Were never dimm'd or stain'd with hostile blood,
But still hang dangling on your feeble thigh,
While through the Mall or Park you show away,
Or through the drawing-room on tiptoe steal.
On poop aloft, to messmates laid along,
Some son of Neptune, whose old wrinkled brow
Has braved the rattling thunder, tells his tale
Of dangers, sieges, and of battles dire;
While they, as fortune favours, greet with smiles,
Or heave the bitter sympathetic sigh,
As the capricious fickle goddess frowns.
Ah, how unstable are the joys of life!
The pleasures, ah, how few! Now smile the skies
With aspect mild; and now the thunders shake,
And all the radiance of the heavens deflower.
Through the small opening of the mainsail broad,
Lo, Boreas steals, and tears him from the yard,
Where long and lasting he has play'd his part!
So suffers virtue. When in her fair form
The smallest flaw is found, the whole decays.
In vain she may implore with piteous eye,
And spread her naked pinions to the blast:
A reputation maim'd finds no repair,
Till death, the ghastly monarch, shuts the scene.
And now we gain the May, whose midnight light,
Like vestal virgins' offerings undecay'd,
To mariners bewilder'd acts the part
Of social friendship, guiding those that err
With kindly radiance to their destined port.
Thanks, kindest nature! for those floating gems,
Those green-grown isles, with which you lavish strew
Great Neptune's empire. But for thee, the main
Were an uncomfortable mazy flood.
No guidance then would bless the steersman's skil',
No resting-place would crown the mariner's wish,
When he to distant gales his canvass spreads
To search new wonders. Here the verdant shores
Teem with new freshness, and regale our sight
With caves, that ancient time, in days of yore,
Sequester'd for the haunt of Druid lone,
There to remain in solitary cell,
Beyond the power of mortals to disjoin
From holy meditation. Happy now
To cast our eyes around from shore to shore,
While by the oozy caverns on the beach
We wander wild, and listen to the roar
Of billows murmuring with incessant noise.
And now, by fancy led, we wander wild
Where o'er the rugged steep the buried dead
Remote lie anchor'd in their parent mould;

Where a few fading willows point the state
Of man's decay. Ah, death! where'er we fly,
Whether we seek the busy and the gay,
The mourner or the joyful, there art thou!
No distant isle, no surly swelling surge,
E'er awed thy progress or controll'd thy sway,
To bless us with that comfort, length of days,
By all aspired at, but by few attain'd.
To Fife we steer—of all beneath the sun
The most unhallow'd 'mid the Scotian plains!
And here (sad emblem of deceitful times!)
Hath sad hypocrisy her standard borne.
Mirth knows no residence; but ghastly fear
Stands trembling and appall'd at airy sights.
Once, only once—reward it, gracious powers!—
Did hospitality, with open face,
And winning smile, cheer the deserted sight,
That else had languish'd for the blest return
Of beauteous day, to dissipate the clouds
Of endless night, and superstition wild,
That constant hover o'er the dark abode.
Oh happy Lothian! happy thrice thy sons!
Who ne'er yet ventured from the southern shore
To tempt misfortune on the Fifan coast:
Again with thee we dwell, and taste thy joys,
Where sorrow reigns not, and where every gale
Is fraught with fulness, blest with living hope,
That fears no canker from the year's decay.

TO SIR JOHN FIELDING,

ON HIS ATTEMPT TO SUPPRESS THE BEGGARS' OPERA.

When you censure the age,
Be cautious and sage,
Lest the courtiers offended should be;
When you mention vice or bribe,
'Tis so pat to all the tribe,
Each cries, "It was levell'd at me!"—GAY.

'Tis woman that seduces all mankind.—*Pitch.*

Beneath what cheerful region of the sky
Shall wit, shall humour, and the Muses fly?
For ours, a cold, inhospitable clime,
Refuses quarter to the Muse and rhyme.
If on her brows an envied laurel springs,
They shake its foliage, crop her growing wings,
That with the plumes of virtue wisely soar,
And all the follies of the age explore.
But should old Grub her rankest venom pour,
And every virtue with a vice deflower,
Her verse is sacred, justices agree;
Even Justice Fielding signs the wise decree.
Let fortune-dealers, wise predicters! tell
From what bright planet Justice Fielding fell.
Augusta trembles at the awful name;
The darling tongue of liberty is tame,
Basely confined by him in Newgate chains,
Nor dare exclaim how harshly Fielding reigns.
In days when every mercer has his scale,
To tell what pieces lack, how few prevail!
I wonder not the low-born menial trade
By partial justice has aside been laid;
For she no discount gives for virtue worn;
Her aged joints are without mercy torn.
In vain, oh Gay! thy Muse explored the way,
Of yore, to banish the Italian lay;
Gave homely numbers sweet, though warmly strong;
The British chorus blest the happy song;
Thy manly voice, and Albion's, then were heard,
Felt by her sons, and by her sons revered:
Eunuchs, not men, now bear aloft the palm,
And o'er our senses pour lethargic balm.
The stage the truest mirror is of life:
Our passions there revolve in active strife;
Each character is there display'd to view;
Each hates his own, though well assured 'tis true.
No marvel, then, that all the world should own
In Peachum's treachery Justice Fielding known;
Since thieves so common are, and, Justice, you
Thieves to the gallows for reward pursue.
Had Gay, by writing, roused the stealing trade,
You'd been less active to suppress your bread:
For, trust me! when a robber loses ground,
You lose your living with your forty pound.
'Twas woman first that snatch'd the luring bait;
The tempter taught her to transgress and eat
Though wrong the deed, her quick compunction told,
She banish'd Adam from an age of gold.
When women now transgress fair virtue's rules,
Men are their pupils, and the stews their schools.
From simple whoredom greater sins began
To shoot, to bloom, to centre all in man:
Footpads on Hounslow flourish here to-day;
The next, old Tyburn sweeps them all away.
For woman's faults, the cause of every wrong,
Men robb'd and murder'd, thieves at Tyburn strung.
In panting breasts to raise the fond alarm;
Make females in the cause of virtue warm;
Gay has compared them to the summer flower,
The boast and glory of an idle hour;
When cropp'd, it falls, shrinks, withers, and decays,
And to oblivion dark consigns its days.
Hath this a power to win the female heart
Back from its vice, from virtue ne'er to part?
If so, the wayward virgin 'twill restore;
And murders, robberies, rapes, will be no more.
These were the lays of him who virtue knew;
Her dictates who revered, and practised too;
No idle theorist in her guiltless ways,
He gave the spotless goddess all his days.
Oh Queensberry!* his best and earliest friend,
All that his wit or learning could command;
Thou best of patrons! of his Muse the pride!
Still in her pageant shalt thou first preside;—
No idle pomp that riches can procure,
Sprung in a moment, faded in an hour,
But pageant lasting as the uncropp'd bay,
That verdant triumphs with the Muse of Gay.

CHARACTER OF A FRIEND,

IN AN EPITAPH WHICH HE DESIRED THE AUTHOR TO WRITE.

Under this turf, to mouldering earth consign'd,
Lies he, who once was fickle as the wind.
Alike the scenes of good and ill he knew,
From the chaste temple to the lewdest stew.
Virtue and vice in him alternate reign'd;—
That fill'd his mind, and this his pocket drain'd;
Till in the contest they so stubborn grew,
Death gave the parting blow, and both withdrew.

TO DR SAMUEL JOHNSON.

FOOD FOR A NEW EDITION OF HIS DICTIONARY.

Let Wilkes and Churchill rage no more,
Though scarce provision, learning's good:
What can these hungries next explore?
Even Samuel Johnson loves our food.

Great pedagogue! whose literarian lore,
With syllable on syllable conjoin'd,
To transmutate and varify, hast learn'd
The whole revolving scientific names
That in the alphabetic columns lie,
Far from the knowledge of mortalic shapes;
As we, who never can peroculate
The miracles by thee miraculised,
The Muse, silential long, with mouth apert,
Would give vibration to stagnatic tongue,
And loud encomiate thy puissant name,
Eulogiated from the green decline

* [Charles, the *good* Duke of Queensberry, the patron of Gay, was then still alive.]

Of Thames's banks to Scoticanian shores,
Where Lochlomondian liquids undulise.
To meminate thy name in after times,
The mighty mayor of each regalian town
Shall consignate thy work to parchment fair
In roll burgharian, and their tables all
Shall fumigate with fumigation strong:
Scotland, from perpendicularian hills,
Shall emigrate her fair muttonian store,
Which late had there in pedestration walk'd,
And o'er her airy heights perambulised.
Oh, blackest execrations on thy head,
Edina shameless! Though he came within
The bounds of your notation, though you knew
His honorific name, you noted not,
But basely suffer'd him to chariotise
Far from your towers with smoke that nubilate,
Nor drank one amicitial swelling cup
To welcome him convivial. Bailies all!
With rage inflated, catenations tear,*
Nor ever after be you vinculised,
Since you that sociability denied
To him whose potent lexiphanian style
Words can prolongate, and inswell his page
With what in others to a line's confined.
Welcome, thou verbal potentate and prince!
To hills and valleys, where emerging oats
From earth assuage our pauperty to bay,
And bless thy name, thy dictionarian skill,
Which there definitive will still remain,
And oft be speculised by taper blue,
While youth studentious turn thy folio page.
Have you, as yet, in per'patetic mood,
Regarded with the texture of the eye
The cave cavernic, where fraternal bard,
Churchill, depicted pauperated swains
With thraldom and bleak want reducted sore;
Where nature, colourised, so coarsely fades,
And puts her russet par'phernalia on?
Have you, as yet, the way explorified
To let lignarian chalice, swell'd with oats,
Thy orifice approach? Have you, as yet,
With skin fresh rubified with scarlet spheres,
Applied brimstonic unction to your hide,
To terrify the salamandrian fire
That from involuntary digits asks
The strong allaceration? Or can you swill
The usquebalian flames of whisky blue
In fermentation strong? Have you applied
The kilt aërian to your Anglian thighs,
And with renunciation assignised
Your breeches in Londona to be worn?
Can you, in frigour of Highlandian sky,
On heathy summits take nocturnal rest?
It cannot be:—You may as well desire
An alderman leave plumpuddenian store,
And scratch the tegument from pottage dish,
As bid thy countrymen, and thee, conjoin'd,
Forsake stomachic joys. Then hie you home,
And be a malcontent, that naked hinds,
On lentils fed, could make your kingdom quake,
And tremulate Old England libertised!

EPITAPH ON GENERAL WOLFE.

In worth exceeding, and in virtue great,
Words would want force his actions to relate.
Silence, ye bards! eulogium vain forbear;
It is enough to say that Wolfe lies here.

EPIGRAM

ON THE NUMEROUS EPITAPHS FOR GENERAL WOLFE; FOR THE BEST OF WHICH A PREMIUM OF £100 WAS PROMISED.

The Muse, a shameless mercenary jade!
Has now assumed the arch-tongued lawyer's trade:
In Wolfe's deserving praises silent she,
Till flatter'd with the prospect of a fee.

* Catenations, *vide Chains.*—JOHNSON.

EPIGRAM

ON SEEING SCALES USED IN A MASON LODGE.

Why should the brethren met in lodge,
Adopt such awkward measures,
To set their scales and weights to judge
The value of their treasures?

The law laid down from age to age,
How can they well o'ercome it?
For it forbids them to engage
With aught but line and plummet.

EPILOGUE,

SPOKEN BY MR WILSON, AT THE THEATRE-ROYAL, IN THE CHARACTER OF AN EDINBURGH BUCK.

Ye who oft finish care in Lethe's cup,
Who love to swear, and roar, and keep it up,
List to a brother's voice, whose sole delight
Is—sleep all day, and riot all the night.
Last night, when potent draughts of mellow wine
Did sober reason into wit refine;
When lusty Bacchus had contrived to drain
The sullen vapours from our shallow brain;
We sallied forth (for valour's dazzling sun
Up to its bright meridian had run),
And, like renown'd Quixotte and his squire,
Spoils and adventures were our sole desire.
First, we approach'd a seeming sober dame,
Preceded by a lanthorn's pallid flame,
Borne by a liveried puppy's servile hand,
The slave obsequious of her stern command.
"Curse on those cits," said I, "who dare disgrace
Our streets at midnight with a sober face;
Let never tallow-chandler give them light,
To guide them through the dangers of the night!"
The valet's cane we snatch'd, and, dam'me! I
Made the frail lanthorn on the pavement lie.
The guard, still watchful of the liege's harm,
With slow-paced motion stalk'd at the alarm.
"Guard, seize the rogues!" the angry madam cried;
And all the guard, with "Seize ta rogue," replied.
As, in a war, there's nothing judged so right
As a concerted and prudential flight,
So we, from guard and scandal to be freed,
Left them the field and burial of their dead.
Next, we approach'd the bounds of George's Square:
Blest place!—no watch, no constables, come there.
Now had they borrow'd Argus' eyes who saw us,
All was made dark and desolate as chaos:
Lamps tumbled after lamps, and lost their lustres,
Like doomsday, when the stars shall fall in clusters.
Let fancy paint what dazzling glory grew
From crystal gems, when Phœbus came in view:
Each shatter'd orb ten thousand fragments strews,
And a new sun in every fragment shows.
Hear, then, my bucks, how drunken fate decreed us
For a nocturnal visit to the Meadows;
And how we, valorous champions! durst engage—
Oh deed unequall'd!—both the Bridge and Cage;[1]
The rage of perilous winters which had stood—
This 'gainst the wind, and that against the flood:
But what nor wind, nor flood, nor Heaven could bend e'er,
We tumbled down, my bucks! and made surrender.
What are your far-famed warriors to us,
'Bout whom historians make such mighty fuss?
Posterity may think it was uncommon
That Troy should be demolish'd for a woman;
But ours your ten years' sieges will excel,
And justly be esteem'd the nonpareil:
Our cause is slighter than a dame's betrothing;
For all these mighty feats have sprung from—*nothing.*

[1] [The *Cage* was a small circular building at the end of the central walk in the Meadows, for the shelter of loungers during a shower. The *Bridge* bestrode a small stream which crossed the same walk.]

POSTHUMOUS POEMS.

PARAPHRASE

OF CHAP. III. OF THE BOOK OF JOB.

Perish the fatal day when I was born,
The night with dreary darkness be forlorn;
The loathed, hateful, and lamented night
When Job, 'twas told, had first perceived the light;
Let it be dark, nor let the God on high
Regard it with a favourable eye;
Let blackest darkness and death's awful shade
Stain it, and make the trembling earth afraid;
Be it not join'd unto the varying year,
Nor to the fleeting months in swift career.
Lo! let the night, in solitude's dismay,
Be dumb to joy, and waste in gloom away;
On it may twilight stars be never known;
Light let it wish for, Lord! but give it none.
Curse it let them who curse the passing day,
And to the voice of mourning raise the lay;
Nor ever be the face of dawning seen
To ope its lustre on the enamell'd green;
Because it seal'd not up my mother's womb,
Nor hid from me the sorrows doom'd to come.
Why, Lord! the wretched object of thine ire,
Did I not rather from the womb expire?
Why did supporting knees prevent my death,
Or suckling breasts sustain my infant breath?
For now my soul with quiet had been blest,
With kings and counsellors of earth at rest,
Who bade the house of desolation rise,
And awful ruin strike tyrannic eyes;
Or with the princes unto whom were told
Rich store of silver and corrupting gold;
Or, as untimely birth, I had not been
Like infant who the light hath never seen:
For there the wicked from their trouble cease,
And there the weary find their lasting peace;
There the poor prisoners together rest,
Nor by the hand of injury are prest;
The small and great together mingled are,
And free the servant from his master, there.
Say, wherefore has an over-bounteous Heaven
Light to the comfortless and wretched given?
Why should the troubled and oppress'd in soul
Fret over restless life's unsettled bowl,
Who long for death, who lists not to their prayer,
And dig as for the treasures hid afar;
Who with excess of joy are blest and glad,
Rejoiced when in the tomb of silence laid?
Why, then, is grateful light bestow'd on man,
Whose life is darkness, all his days a span?
For ere the morn return'd, my sighing came,
My mourning pour'd out as the mountain stream;
Wild-visaged fear, with sorrow-mingled eye,
And wan destruction, hideous, stared me nigh!
For though no rest or safety blest my soul,
New trouble came, new darkness, new control.

ODE TO HORROR.

Oh thou, who with incessant gloom
Courts the recess of midnight tomb!
Admit me of thy mournful throng,
The scatter'd woods and wilds among.
If e'er thy discontented ear
The voice of sympathy can cheer,
My melancholy bosom's sigh
Shall to your mournful plaint reply;
There to the fear-foreboding owl
The angry furies hiss and howl;
Or near the mountain's pendant brow,
Where rush-clad streams in cadent murmurs flow.

EPODE.

Who's he that with imploring eye
Salutes the rosy dawning sky?
The cock proclaims the morn in vain,
His sp'rit to drive to its domain:
For morning light can but return
To bid the wretched wail and mourn.
Not the bright dawning's purple eye
Can cause the frightful vapours fly;
Nor sultry sol's meridian throne
Can bid surrounding fears be gone.
The gloom of night will still preside,
While angry conscience stares on either side.

STROPHE.

To ease his sore distemper'd head,
Sometimes upon the rocky bed
Reclined he lies, to list the sound
Of whispering reed in vale profound.
Happy if Morpheus visits there,
A while to lull his woe and care;
Send sweeter fancies to his aid,
And teach him to be undismay'd!
Yet wretched still; for when no more
The gods their opiate balsam pour,
Behold! he starts, and views again
The Libyan monster prance along the plain.
Now from the oozing cave he flies,
And to the city's tumult hies,
Thinking to frolic life away;
Be ever cheerful, ever gay:
But though enwrapp'd in noise and smoke,
They ne'er can heal his peace when broke;
His fears arise, he sighs again
For solitude on rural plain:
Even there his wishes all convene
To bear him to his noise again.
Thus tortured, rack'd, and sore opprest,
He ever hunts, but never finds his rest.

ANTISTROPHE.

Oh exercise! thou healing power,
The toiling rustic's chiefest dower;
Be thou with heaven-born virtue join'd,
To quell the tumults of the mind;
Then man as much of joy can share
From ruffian winter, bleakly bare,
As from the pure ethereal blaze
That wantons in the summer rays.
The humble cottage then can bring
Content, the comfort of a king;
And gloomy mortals wish no more
For wealth and idleness, to make them poor.

ODE TO DISAPPOINTMENT.

Thou joyous fiend, life's constant foe,
Sad source of care, and spring of woe,
Soft pleasure's hard control:
Her gayest haunts for ever nigh,
Stern mistress of the secret sigh
That swells the murmuring soul.

Why haunt'st thou me through deserts drear?
With grief-swoln sounds why wound my ear,
Denied to pity's aid?
Thy visage wan did e'er I woo,
Or at thy feet in homage bow,
Or court thy sullen shade?

Even now enchanted scenes abound,
Elysian glories strew the ground,
To lure the astonish'd eyes;
Now horrors, hell, and furies reign,
And desolate the fairy scene
Of all its gay disguise.

The passions, at thy urgent call,
Our reason and our sense enthral
In phrensy's fetters strong.
And now despair, with lurid eye,
Doth meagre poverty descry,
Subdued by famine long.

The lover flies the haunts of day,
In gloomy woods and wilds to stray,
There shuns his Jessy's scorn;
Sad sisters of the sighing grove
Attune their lyres to hapless love,
Dejected and forlorn.

Yet hope undaunted wears thy chain,
And smiles amidst the growing pain,
Nor fears thy sad dismay;
Unawed by power, her fancy flies
From earth's dim orb to purer skies,
To realms of endless day.

DIRGE.

The waving yew or cypress wreath
In vain bequeath the mighty tear;
In vain the awful pomp of death
Attends the sable-shrouded bier.

Since Strephon's virtue's sunk to rest,
Nor pity's sigh, nor sorrow's strain,
Nor magic tongue, have e'er confest
Our wounded bosom's secret pain.

The just, the good, more honours share
In what the conscious heart bestows,
Than vice adorn'd with sculptor's care,
In all the venal pomp of woes.

A sad-eyed mourner at his tomb,
Thou, friendship! pay thy rights divine,
And echo through the midnight gloom
That Strephon's early fall was thine.

HORACE, ODE XI. LIB. I.

Ne'er fash your thumb what gods decree
To be the weird o' you or me,
Nor deal in cantrip's kittle cunning
To spier how fast your days are running;
But patient lippen for the best,
Nor be in dowy thought opprest.
Whether we see mair winters come,
Than this that spits wi' canker'd foam.
Now moisten weel your geyzen'd wa's
Wi' couthy friends and hearty blaws;
Ne'er let your hope o'ergang your days,
For eild and thraldom never stays;
The day looks gash, toot aff your horn,
Nor care ae strae about the morn.

ON NIGHT.

Now murky shades surround the pole;
Darkness lords without control:
To the notes of buzzing owl,
Lions roar and tigers howl,
Fright'ning from their azure shrine
Stars that wont in orbs to shine:
Now the sailor's storm-toss'd bark
Knows no blest celestial mark,
While in the briny troubled deep
Dolphins change their sport for sleep;
Ghosts, and frightful spectres gaunt,
Church-yard's dreary footpaths haunt,
And brush with wither'd arms the dews
That fall upon the drooping yews.

THE AUTHOR'S LIFE.

My life is like the flowing stream
That glides where summer's beauties teem,
Meets all the riches of the gale
That on its watery bosom sail,
And wanders 'midst Elysian groves
Through all the haunts that fancy loves.
May I, when drooping days decline,
And 'gainst those genial streams combine,
The winter's sad decay forsake,
And centre in my parent lake.

SONG.

Since brightest beauty soon must fade,
That in life's spring so long has roll'd,
And wither in the drooping shade,
E'er it return to native mould—
Ye virgins, seize the fleeting hour,
In time catch Cytherea's joy,
Ere age your wonted smiles deflower,
And hopes of love and life annoy.

EPIGRAM

ON A LAWYER'S DESIRING ONE OF THE TRIBE TO LOOK WITH RESPECT TO A GIBBET.

The lawyers may revere that tree
Where thieves so oft have strung,
Since, by the law's most wise decree,
Her thieves are never hung.

EPIGRAM

ON THE AUTHOR'S INTENTION OF GOING TO SEA.

Fortune and Bob, e'er since his birth,
Could never yet agree;
She fairly kick'd him from the earth
To try his fate at sea.

EPIGRAM

WRITTEN EXTEMPORE, AT THE DESIRE OF A GENTLEMAN WHO WAS RATHER ILL-FAVOURED, BUT WHO HAD A FAMILY OF BEAUTIFUL CHILDREN.

Scott and his children emblems are
Of real good and evil;
His children are like cherubims,
But Scott is like the devil.

END OF FERGUSSON'S POEMS.

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